



First Session - Thirty-Seventh Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

Official Report
(Hansard)

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The Honourable George Hickes
Speaker*



MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Seventh Legislature

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 4, 2000

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

CBC "24 Hours"

Hon. Diane McGifford (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, I have a statement for the House.

I would like to make a statement to the House with respect to a matter of some concern to this Government and to the citizens of Manitoba. It has come to the Government's attention that the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the CBC, will shortly be undertaking a restructuring of its local and regional programming. This restructuring may involve changes which would jeopardize the future of supper hour regional news programs such as Manitoba's "24 hours". Because CBC's "24 hours" is a valuable asset to the life of our community, making a unique contribution to Manitobans' knowledge about and understanding of their province, the Government views any changes at the CBC which would compromise the future of this program as a matter of concern.

Accordingly, I have written to my colleague the Honourable Sheila Copps Minister of Canadian Heritage and Minister responsible for the CBC, to express Manitoba's concern and our profound hope that, whatever the nature of internal restructuring undertaken by the Corporation, our national broadcaster should honour its unique responsibilities to support and provide programming reflective of all regions of Canada while continuing to serve the special needs of those regions.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to read that letter into the record. I am very pleased to table the letter as well as read it into the record:

"Dear Ms. Copps: As Manitoba's Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism, I am writing to

bring to your attention our Government's deep concern over recent media reports regarding the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. It is our understanding that the Corporation will shortly announce the cancellation, with few exceptions, of local and regional supper-hour news programs currently being produced on a provincial and/or regional basis across the country.

"The Government of Manitoba considers CBC Winnipeg's local and regional news program, '24 Hours,' to be a valuable asset to the life of our community. We believe '24 Hours' contributes in a unique and substantive way to Manitobans' knowledge about, and understanding of, their province. We trust that the federal Government shares our concern about the future of programs such as '24 Hours' and that you will undertake appropriate intervention on behalf of these vital Canadian productions.

"It is our profound hope that the Corporation, as our national broadcaster, will honour its unique historic responsibilities and renew its commitment to regional programming, including news productions such as '24 Hours.'

Thank you for your consideration of this vital matter."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Gary Filmon (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister for rising in the House today. I think it gives us an opportunity to point out that the last few days, in fact since this session began, the ministers are literally using the vehicle of ministerial statements to filibuster and fill in time in the House. When it comes to reading their correspondence into the record for the sake of filling time here, it is getting to a bit of an extreme.

I am surprised, however, that the Minister did not get up to make a statement on the YM-YWCA Women of Distinction Awards last evening, where some significant Manitobans

were honoured. I would have thought that that might have been a priority with her, Mr. Speaker.

But, having said that, I will say that our Government, on many occasions, wrote to both the CBC and the CRTC to emphasize the need for strong regional programming, including news and local affairs, as part of its mandate.

We also recognize that a well-informed citizenry is the greatest protection that we have for a strong democracy. So it is in everybody's interest to ensure that our citizenry are well informed on a daily basis. Certainly, vehicles such as the news broadcasts are very much a part of that. So we thank the Minister for that statement, Mr. Speaker.

* (13:35)

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I ask for leave to speak on the Minister's statement.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to indicate that there is all-party support for the CBC in Manitoba and for a strong CBC. I make the statement notwithstanding the recognition that there are huge changes in what is happening in broadcasting and the information world at the moment, as was indicated, for example, in a speech given yesterday at the Rotary Club by Leonard Asper, and it is natural that there would be some restructuring. Nevertheless, clearly, we would like as strong as possible a CBC presence in Manitoba and emphasis on what is important for Manitoba local news as well as other Manitoba programming.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 25—The Interpretation and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), that leave be given to introduce Bill 25, The Interpretation and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi d'interprétation et modifications corrélatives), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Mackintosh: This bill is an extensive revision of The Interpretation Act. Some of its new features include the following: new rules of interpretation for bilingual acts and regulations and a requirement that acts and regulations are to be interpreted in a way that protects aboriginal and treaty rights. There are a number of other features, Mr. Speaker.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 26—The Court of Queen's Bench Amendment Act

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak), that leave be given to introduce Bill 26, The Court of Queen's Bench Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Cour du Banc de la Reine), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, these amendments provide that mediators and parties in family proceedings cannot give evidence regarding the mediation, with certain exceptions.

Motion agreed to.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all members to the gallery where we have with us from Darwin School 56 Grade 9 students under the direction of Mrs. Sandy Hircak-Shuster. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Riel (Ms. Asper).

Also, we have with us seated in the gallery 25 Grade 11 History students from Warren Collegiate under the direction of Mr. Jake Wiebe and Mr. John Smith. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns).

Also, we have with us from St. George School 18 Grade 9 students under the direction of Ms. Julie Stewart. This school is located in

the constituency of the Honourable Member for St. Vital (Ms. Allan).

On behalf of all honourable members, we welcome you here today.

* (13:40)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Children's Services Recreational Opportunities

Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Premier or the Deputy Premier.

In last year's provincial general election, the New Democratic Party campaigned on a program for safe places to play and committed to open schools after hours and expand recreational opportunities for children and youth. In fact, on election night, Gary Doer, the Leader of that party, said: now the lights will go on in the gyms.

Well, the fact of the matter is, in 1998, the former Government, this party, established such a program that opened up 13 gyms in the city of Winnipeg for exactly that kind of program. We have recently learned from sources in the police community for the Police Athletic Club program that officials of their Government have spoken to them about closing those programs. Can the Deputy Premier confirm if that is their intention?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I think I just heard the topic of crime prevention coming from members opposite. I cannot believe it. Here is a party, while in government for 11 years, saw as its main crime prevention tool 7-Eleven. I could assure members opposite that we will be making announcements for a new era of hope and opportunities for youth, and some of those announcements will be made in the course of the budget presentation next week.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Justice, who is responsible for this program, will he now then confirm, given his answer just recently, that it is the intention of the Doer Government to close that program in those 13

sites and deny those children the opportunity that those police athletic clubs provide? Will he confirm that that is their intention?

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, I would urge the Honourable Member to try and spend more time on the research of these issues. He should be well aware that the program of which I understand he speaks is the Winnipeg Police Athletic Club. As the name speaks to, it is a program of the Winnipeg Police which we are helping. The former Government began assistance for that program financially, and we will continue to support that program, if the police are willing and able to continue it and to look at the evaluations that took place of that program.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, what we are hearing from the Minister of Justice is the announcement of the closure of that program in Wellington constituency, Kildonan constituency, Lord Roberts constituency, The Maples, Radisson, Minto, Seine River, Kirkfield Park, Fort Whyte and Charleswood, in many of his own colleagues' constituencies.

I ask the Attorney General: Given that that program was initiated by the Province of Manitoba, sponsored by the Winnipeg Athletic Club, funded by this Province, is he telling us today that Gary Doer's promise of turning the lights on really turns out to be we are turning the lights off in those 13 gymnasiums, we are turning out hope for the children of those parts of the city?

Mr. Mackintosh: The phrase "over the top" comes to mind.

I want to advise the Honourable Member that this program is called the Winnipeg Police Athletic Club. It was devised by the City of Winnipeg Police Service. It is a program of the Winnipeg Police Service and the Province is one of the funders of that, I understand, along with the City of Winnipeg and the federal Government.

Mr. Speaker, if the Winnipeg Police have agreed or have made a decision not to continue the program in certain schools, I would certainly regret that. We are at the table always to look for

programs like this. Indeed, I can tell this House that, under this Government, and sooner than later, programs in schools for the after-hours use of schools will not only continue but they will be enhanced like never seen before. We cannot afford in any way to be turning off the lights in schools at the end of the school day.

* (13:45)

Point of Order

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader): I was waiting and waiting, but, Mr. Speaker, Beauchesne 417: "Answers to questions should be as brief as possible, deal with the matter raised and should not provoke debate."

Mr. Speaker, the question was clear and simple. Is the Minister going to fund the program, yes or no? Is he going to close the lights out for the children of Manitoba?

Mr. Mackintosh: On the same point of order, I do not think the Member was listening. We are committed to programs like this. We are committed to this program. The funding will flow, if the police want the program to continue.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order, the Honourable Member does have a point of order, and I would like to remind all ministers that, according to Beauchesne's Citation 417, answers to questions should be brief as possible, please.

Doris Mae Oulton Firing

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): I am disappointed that the Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Ms. McGifford) did not rise in this House and make a ministerial statement about the Women of Distinction Awards last night.

Mr. Speaker, given that Doris Mae Oulton, the former CEO of the now-abolished Children and Youth Secretariat was recognized by her peers and by the community as a recipient of the YM-YWCA's Women of Distinction Award, my question for the First Minister is: Why did he

and his cabinet colleagues fire a long-time civil servant who was hired and promoted by the Pawley administration and has an exemplary career dealing with children, women, youth and families and is well respected by the community?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the Government, in reviewing the resources in all of our departments, felt—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, the Government, in evaluating the resources that we were left with in Government, felt—and I would ask members to wait for our budget because we feel it is very, very important to have fewer people in the bureaucracy and more people—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Doer: We are trying to move more resources into children and to children's programs, and I would ask members to stay tuned for the budget.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure that Manitoba women will be very satisfied with that answer.

I do want to address my second question to the Minister responsible for the Status of Women. What did she do during discussions around the Cabinet table to defend the position of this very accomplished woman civil servant?

Hon. Diane McGifford (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Minister for her question, but I would also like to point out, as she well knows, that discussions around the Cabinet are confidential. However, I would like to address the issue of our party's commitment to children. Our commitment to children, I think, is very clear in our Healthy Child initiative. For the edification of members opposite, I would like to table our news release on that Healthy Child initiative.

* (13:50)

Point of Order

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader): On a point of order, again, Mr. Speaker, Beauchesne 417, answers to questions should be as brief as possible, and importantly, deal with the matter raised and should not provoke debate. The question was very clear. Did she support Doris Mae Oulton at the Cabinet table or not?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would like to take this opportunity to once again remind all honourable ministers, according to Beauchesne Citation 417, answers to questions should be as brief as possible, deal with the matter raised and not provoke debate.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, I am sure, was just about ready to conclude her answer.

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, Cabinet discussions are confidential. However, I did support those 1000 nurses, mostly female, that the members opposite fired.

Mr. Speaker: I would just like to advise honourable members that according to Beauchesne Citation 410(4), in the view of the watching public, decorum is of importance, and also, according to Beauchesne Citation 410(3) time is scarce, and we are losing time when the House is a little bit in disorder once in awhile. I would just ask honourable members to have a little patience and just be patient with one another for answers and questions.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for River East, with her question.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the University Women's Club will be very pleased with that response.

Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet Appointments—Women

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): My final question is for the First Minister. Given that the new structure that his Government has set up with the Cabinet committee to deal with the issues of women, children and youth has five male Cabinet ministers and not one single female Cabinet Minister on that committee, who I think might add some value to a committee that is dealing with the very sensitive issues of women and children and healthy child development, would the First Minister now reconsider and appoint a woman to that committee, at least one woman, so that there might be a balance and that sensitive approach that women bring to the table?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, as a father and as a male, I certainly believe that those of us of both sexes are qualified to deal with children and to deal with—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

* (13:55)

Mr. Doer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have appointed people. We are proud of the fact that we have elected nine women to our caucus, which I think is the largest number in the history of the province. We are proud of the fact—*[interjection]* Perhaps, we can get some order. If you are going to ask a question, be prepared to listen to the answer.

The appointments we made to Cabinet were based on merit. We have people who are female members of our Cabinet. A lot of times in past governments, the people carrying the portfolios, the so-called social services portfolios were women and the people carrying the economic portfolios were men. We did not approach it either way, but we were proud of the fact that I think we have the first Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) in the history of Canada who is a woman. We are proud of that. I believe we have the first Minister ever of Mines, who is a geologist, who is a woman, on our side, and I could go on and on and on. But the people who

are ministers of Health, Minister responsible for Family Services (Mr. Sale), the other ministers on the committee dealing with children happen to be males, but they are males because they are running the portfolios that they have been assigned to, and that is the way it should be.

**Doris Mae Oulton
Firing**

Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, the First Minister and his Cabinet colleagues have fired an accomplished civil servant, who has served well under a variety of administrations.

Can the First Minister (Mr. Doer) comment on what message this Government is sending to other accomplished career civil servants, especially women who have had exemplary service under various administrations?

Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to answer this question not only as Minister of Labour, which is perhaps not traditionally a role filled by women on this committee—[*interjection*] If you would let me finish my answer, you would hear about it.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet, on a point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, while the members opposite pat themselves on the back, they do stretch facts. I would point out to the Member that probably the first female Minister of Labour was the former Member, Norma Price from Assiniboia, and Gerrie Hammond, also a Conservative, served as Minister of Labour in a Conservative Government.

* (14:00)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable First Minister, on the same point of order.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): On the same point of order. Mr. Speaker, we should all be striving to elect more women to this Legislature, but

these questions, quite frankly, are quite silly. Men not being capable of dealing with children—and if there was something in Bourinot's to deal with that, you should rule accordingly. I think it is appropriate that all men and women are qualified to do their jobs.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would ask all members for a little co-operation, so we can continue on with questions and answers.

On both points of order, there is no point of order, just a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, if I had been allowed to continue with my answer to the question, I would have said, and I will say now, that there have been women ministers of Labour in this Chamber in the past, two of whom were Mary Beth Dolin for the New Democratic Party and Gerrie Hammond for the Progressive Conservative Party, both of whom were exemplary ministers of the Crown, neither of whom is with us here today, but if either of them were with us today they would be appalled by the politicization of the YM-YWCA Women of the Year Awards last night by this party in Opposition. And further—

Point of Order

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): I think my former colleague Gerrie Hammond would be absolutely appalled at the treatment of Doris Mae Oulton, who was the person who was instrumental for the Women's Initiative under our Government and was the deputy that worked very closely with Gerrie Hammond. She would be ashamed of the treatment that Doris Mae has received.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Government House Leader, on the same point of order.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): We have been hearing here today, I am afraid, I think some unfortunate language. I think there is some intemperate positioning being taken. I do not think it is in anyone's interest that Question Period be conducted in this way. You

have admonished the House twice already during Question Period; I believe a third time perhaps. I ask again, Mr. Speaker, if you could ask the members to allow the answers to proceed and not rise up on matters of order that are not drawing the attention of the House to departure from proceedings.

The Member opposite just got up on a point of order to interrupt the Minister in her remarks and her answers to the question. The point of order in no way raised the attention of the House or the Speaker to a departure from the rules of proceeding. That is what a point of order is for. I would ask, Mr. Speaker, if you could remind the House the point of a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: I just got some information on that exact point. Points of order are questions raised with the view of calling attention to any departure from the standing orders or the customary modes of proceedings in the debate or in the conduct of legislative business and may be raised at any time by any member, whether the Member has previously spoken or not. That is Beauchesne Citation 316. I would just like to remind all honourable members the purpose of the point of order. Both points of order, I think, have been dealt with.

* * *

Ms. Barrett: In conclusion to my answer, I just find it very interesting that the person that has been referenced here today whose position was made redundant through restructuring, this happened well before the House resumed debate. Why has it taken them, if they were so concerned about this situation, the day after the politicization of the YM-YWCA Women of the Year Award for them to do this at this time? Why was-

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I take it very seriously when you bring a matter to this House. I only wish that the ministers would take into consideration when you have ruled on Beauchesne 417 and said that answers to

questions should be as brief as possible and deal with the matter raised and should not provoke debate.

Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what this Minister has been up to ever since she started answering this question. Ask her to just answer the question or sit down.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Official Opposition House Leader does have a point of order. I would like to once again remind honourable ministers that according to Beauchesne Citation 417: "Answers to questions should be as brief as possible, deal with the matter raised and should not provoke debate."

* * *

Mrs. Smith: Mr. Speaker, given members opposite have hired at least 300 new civil servants, why did they not consider Doris Mae Oulton, honoured by her peers last night as a woman of distinction, appropriate for another government position, instead of firing her outright?

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, as has been answered in earlier responses to these questions, these are issues that were discussed and debated in Cabinet. They are, by definition, not open.

As far as hiring 300 new people, I would just like to point out, as we have had discussions in this House before about the issue of front-line service people that have been hired, another thing that the Opposition may be interested in knowing, that the vacancy rate just before we took office in September of last year was 4.8 percent. March 31 of this year the vacancy rate was 5.5 percent, an increase of 0.2 over the previous month. So we are managing.

We have more vacancies in the civil service today then, and it is not seasonal because we have not started the spring seasonal employment. So we have managed the civil service vacancy rate very well.

* (14:10)

Mrs. Smith: Mr. Speaker, I have listened to all the so-called answers, and I just want to ask

members opposite: Is this just another example of the Government letting accomplished civil servants go when they can give their own government friends the jobs?

Hon. Diane McGifford (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Labour (Ms. Barrett) has tried to make clear, but the din on the other side has made it very difficult, the point with this particular individual is that this Government has taken a new direction.

One of our initiatives is the Healthy Child Initiative. We have raised the concerns of children to a ministerial level. We want to strengthen our programs for children by returning them to the Department. We also are aware that returning these programs to the Department will cut down on administrative costs and allow monies that were previously deployed into administration to be used for providing services for children. As far as our commitment for children, stay tuned, they are going to hear a lot more.

**Doris Mae Oulton
Firing**

Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the Civil Service.

What is interesting about this is we appreciate that governments do make changes in staff. We appreciate that every government does bring in some staff who are politically associated with it. We understand that, but the issue here is, we understand governments do change their structure, but what the Minister has admitted here, and this is coming to my question, is that rather than moving a career civil servant who Howard Pawley's Government had brought in and promoted, who has served all ministers of whatever political stripe well in this province, who has been recognized by the community, that the Cabinet of Manitoba chose to fire her rather than reassign her to other positions.

I ask the Minister: What signal does that send to the career civil servant within government?

Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister responsible for the Civil Service): Mr. Speaker, as the Minister responsible for Culture has said, we have made changes in direction, we have made changes in other administrative levels. We have five fewer deputy ministers than the former Government did. Where was the discussion from the Opposition on those changes?

Government has the right and the authority and the responsibility to ensure that the programs that are brought in by the Government are programs that reflect the ideas and the priorities of the Government. Every single government, when they come in, if they are good governments, as they go through their mandate, makes changes and, based on the new realities of reviewing, makes those changes. Sometimes that means changes in personnel as well.

Mr. Praznik: I would ask the Minister if she would confirm that the Department's recommendation to Cabinet was in fact to reassign Doris Mae Oulton to other duties, and it was the decision of the Cabinet not to accept that but to fire Doris Mae Oulton.

Hon. Diane McGifford (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, the answer is, of course, no.

Mr. Praznik: A final supplementary to the Minister responsible for the Status of Women.

I just ask the Minister, having sat in this House with her for many years, that every occasion where a woman has been honoured in this province, she has risen up on a statement to recognize that accomplishment, why then did she not rise up today in Ministerial Statements to recognize the award of Doris Mae Oulton as YM-YWCA Woman of the Year? Why were they so ashamed to do it? Because they cannot look her in the face?

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Speaker, I think the Member opposite, if he recalls clearly, will remember that generally I have congratulated women in a member's statement. If he stays tuned, he will find that those offers are—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Speaker, I am sure members opposite would not have wanted me to make another ministerial statement today. They were already complaining that I made one. It seems you cannot please them.

First Nations Casinos Public Consultations

Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale): Mr. Speaker, over the last while the members on this side of the House and indeed the public of Manitoba have been asking the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs for public hearings in regard to the issue of casinos. We have asked continually in this House whether the Minister would now listen to the people who have asked for public consultations and will he ask for public consultations before licences are issued?

The other day he got up in the House here and demanded public hearings for the CRTC. We are saying the same thing. Will he ask for public hearings in regard to casinos before the licences are issued?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister charged with the administration of The Gaming Control Act): Well, Mr. Speaker, does the Member opposite—and first of all, I thank you very much for the question, but does the Member opposite really want to start discussing consultation on MTS and consultation on casinos on Regent and McPhillips? I think not.

Point of Order

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader): Well, Mr. Speaker, we are off to a good start to Beauchesne's 417, answers to questions should be brief.

It was brief, Mr. Speaker. The only problem is it did not deal with the matter, and he is provoking debate right off the bat, so please ask the Minister to answer the question.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would like to ask the Honourable Minister to answer the question that has been raised.

* * *

Mr. Lemieux: We have a sound framework in place. We have put that in place with two extremely competent individuals, Mr. Nadeau and Mr. Freedman. They have a process that is in place that will come to completion as of May 31.

Mr. Speaker, that particular process I am certainly not going to prejudice in any way, prejudice the outcome. They are looking at all the options and the proposals, and Mr. Government—or Mr. Speaker, I am sorry. I am sorry, Mr. Speaker. This committee has the full confidence of this Government. Thank you.

Mr. Reimer: Mr. Speaker, I know that—I will not call you Mr. Government, Mr. Speaker.

My further question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs is: He has mentioned that the two-person committee will have this selection process before them—I believe it is before the end of May for a selection. I refer to an article—

* (14:20)

Point of Order

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I refer to Beauchesne Citation 410: "supplementary questions require no preambles." If you could ask the Member to simply pose the question. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Government House Leader does have a point of order. Beauchesne's Citation 409.(2) advises that a supplementary question should not require a preamble. I would ask the Honourable Member to please put his question.

* * *

Mr. Reimer: My question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, Mr. Speaker: Can he confirm that a spokesperson for the Lotteries commission has stated that it appears that the Province has every intention of accepting the selections, final recommendations, which means that the recommendations will be made with no public consultation?

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Speaker, this Government would certainly want the right to make a final decision on any matter, as any elected government has, and has that responsibility and authority to the people who have elected them. The committee that is certainly in place right now is doing a very good job, and they certainly have been charged with doing this and looking at the proposals that have been put forward to them. By May 31, they are going to be making recommendations to this Government.

Mr. Reimer: Mr. Speaker, my further question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

Can he confirm then that there will be no input, there will be no public consultation, there will be no reference to referendums or plebiscites in the communities that are going to be affected, the final decision will be made by he and the Cabinet colleagues, and the public will not have any input into these decisions?

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Speaker, there has been more consultation taking place in the last six months from this Government than has taken place in the last 10 years from the previous Government.

Mr. Speaker, just to conclude, I just want to say that, with regard to this issue, there is a selection committee in place that are trying to depoliticize the process. We feel that this is a very appropriate way to go. As well, the public feels that this is the way to go to depoliticize it and also to have an independent selection committee put in place to deal with this issue. Let us not forget, this is to provide jobs for First Nations people. History will show that this Government will be looked upon in history as walking hand-in-hand with First Nations people.

Just to conclude, the selection committee will make their recommendation to this Government. This Government will always reserve the right to make a final decision on behalf of all taxpayers of the province.

Research and Development Funding

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yesterday, the Premier presented the report of the Manitoba

Century Summit, and on page 6, clearly, 38 participants, on many occasions, indicated the importance of expanding research and development for innovation in business, industry and education as critical.

Will the Premier—given this report which I table which indicates that over the last 10 years the Manitoba economy has lost hundreds of millions of dollars due to the poor investment of research—commit to increasing the provincial investment of research in the upcoming budget next week?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the largest loss of Manitoba's research and development in the last 10 years was the closure of the AECL scientific plant in Pinawa, a project that was stewarded through Cabinet by the Member opposite. Some \$70 million were lost in research and development to the province.

We are concerned about the number of bodies looking at innovation and research in Manitoba. We have referred this matter to the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce and the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce. There is the innovation network. There is the technology innovation centre. There are a number of other economic bodies that all have a little piece of research. We have asked the business community to give us their best advice about how best to put that together and focus that effort. We have not yet received that recommendation from the business community. I have met with all the bodies separately, and so has the Minister of Industry, Trade and Mines (Ms. Mihychuk).

We see R&D as not just a short-term issue for our next budget but a longer-term issue for government, as recommended at the Century Summit a couple of months ago.

Mr. Gerrard: My supplementary to the Premier: Given Statistics Canada's report which shows that the provincial investment in research in Manitoba is approximately half that of Saskatchewan, Alberta, Ontario and Québec on a per-capita basis, will the Premier commit to raising the level of provincial investment up to what is equivalent in our neighbouring provinces?

* (14:30)

Mr. Doer: I think over our term in office there is no question that we feel some of the innovations made in the bio-tech industry in Saskatchewan and some of the other innovations made in R&D in other provinces, some of the great opportunities for research and development in agriculture-research and development, for example, in terms of hog manure, can there be greater utilization of that waste resource? We are looking at ideas there.

Our first plan of attack is to get—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Doer: I know members opposite are not interested in research and development, but perhaps we can get on with the debate. The first step we are taking with the research is with the business community who are participating in about three or four different bodies and trying to get a co-ordinated approach. The second approach is how, in agriculture particularly, can we look at research and development.

So I would say to the question that we should be comparable to other jurisdictions, both federally, on a per-capita basis, because that has gone down dramatically with the AECL reduction, and provincially, but it will take us some time to make sure we do it right.

Mr. Speaker: The time for Oral Questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Ann Henry

Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski (St. James): I would like to take this opportunity to mark the passing of a woman who served Manitoba with distinction, Ann Henry. She died two days ago at the age of 85. Ann Henry had the distinction of being the first woman reporter to cover the Manitoba Legislature and the Winnipeg Police Court. As a journalist and columnist with the *Winnipeg Tribune*, she became the first woman assigned to cover hard news at a fraction of the wages her male colleagues received. Her play about the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike entitled

Lulu Street was a milestone, the first play written by a Manitoban about Manitoba to appear on Winnipeg's largest stage.

She was a feminist and a single mother before anyone used these terms. Her children proudly bear their mother's maiden name. All her life she railed against inequalities and took up cudgels on behalf of the underprivileged. She was ready to fight the world single-handedly, if need be, on behalf of justice.

I invite my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to this bold-spirited woman and to the legacy she has left us. In this vein, we can all be proud of the women who were honoured last night at the YM-YWCA's 24th annual Women of Distinction Awards dinner. I was grateful to be there and share in their moment of glory. I could feel the strength, energy and passion of these women. The packed ballroom with its sea of recognizable faces gave testimony to the importance of the event and the honours bestowed.

I would like to congratulate warmly the winners of the awards: Isabella Dryden, Kathryn Knowles, Dr. Rosanna Peeling, Doris Mae Oulton and Rosy Win. Congratulations as well to Jennifer Barton, the recipient of the Gerrie Hammond Award of Promise. This well-staged event is best summed up with the president's remark: "Wow."

YM-YWCA Women of Distinction Awards

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Seine River): Mr. Speaker, last night I and eight of my caucus colleagues had the pleasure of attending the 24th Annual YM-YWCA Women of Distinction Awards.

These women are from all walks of life. They are volunteers, professional women and businesswomen. Women have always made a valuable contribution to the lives of their families, to our economy, in fact to all facets of our society. Manitoba and Winnipeg have many women of distinction.

Although I have attended many of these Women of Distinction Awards banquets, last

evening's awards ceremony was particularly special for me.

One of the award recipients, Isabella Dryden, was my former teacher and mentor. She was a dedicated and enthusiastic teacher who pioneered the development and expansion of business education in Manitoba and across Canada. She has also been a good friend not only to me, but to all those she has helped in her capacity as a volunteer computer instructor with Creative Retirement Manitoba and at Salisbury and Lavallee schools. Isabella is also one of my constituents. She has been a very active volunteer at Kerchov [phonetic] Gardens.

A number of other talented women were honoured last night including Kathryn Knowles, who is the founder of the Osute Children's Library Fund, a group that promotes literacy opportunities in Ghana; Dr. Rosanna Peeling, a microbiologist, who has done important research in fields ranging from sexually transmitted diseases to women's health; and Rosy Win, a Burmese refugee, who founded Empowering Women of Canada, an organization that now has chapters in Winnipeg and Vancouver.

In addition, Miles Macdonnell Collegiate student Jennifer Barton received the Gerrie Hammond Award of Promise for her work supporting a Vietnam orphanage and encouraging her colleagues to volunteer with elementary students.

I would also like to recognize winner Doris Mae Oulton, who was nominated by the University Women's Club of Winnipeg and the Children and Youth Secretariat staff.

Mrs. Dacquay: May I have leave, please, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker: Leave. *[Agreed]*

Mrs. Dacquay: Ms. Oulton has always been involved in women's issues, as seen in her involvement with the Canadian Federation of University Women, the Ottawa Women's Credit Union, through her work with the National Film Board, while promoting films on women and work and through her current work on the book *Extraordinary Ordinary Women*.

Unfortunately, in spite of her significant involvement to the Manitoba Civil Service and indeed her countless contributions to Manitoba families, the current administration has chosen to do away with the Children and Youth Secretariat and in turn Ms. Oulton's position.

The decision to eliminate someone so clearly dedicated to improving the lives of Manitoba's children and youth is short-sighted, to say the least. Ms. Oulton was a hardworking individual who was not afraid to accept a challenge, to roll up her sleeves and get the job done.

I would like to close by congratulating not only the winners of the awards but all of those who were nominated. I think we can safely say that they are all women of distinction. I would also like to congratulate the YM-YWCA for providing us with the opportunity to honour the women who have contributed so much to the fabric of Manitoba life. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Menno Klassen

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, I rise today in appreciation and recognition of a great Manitoban, Mr. Menno Klassen of Winnipeg, who has consistently and effectively worked toward the service of others. Recently, with 66 other recipients, Mr. Klassen received the Governor General's Caring Canadian Award in recognition of his volunteer service to the community. The Governor General's Caring Canadian Award was created by the Right Honourable Romeo LeBlanc, who was determined to thank the thousands of caring people who give of themselves to make the lives of others better.

The focus of the award is to give attention to the hidden helpers and volunteers whose compassion and charity are part of the Canadian character. Mr. Klassen's altruism meets and exceeds all these expectations.

* (14:40)

In true Mennonite tradition, Menno Klassen has devoted an enormous amount of energy to peace and justice issues. He has done this with humility, with a sense of humour and with a

positive attitude. He has been a volunteer visitor of inmates at the Stony Mountain Penitentiary for 15 years. Additionally, for 12 years, he was a member of the Mennonite Central Committee's Peace and Social Concerns Committee and has been a member of a number of other groups promoting peace, including Pastors for Peace.

Despite health problems, Mr. Klassen continues to participate in many peace, environmental and social justice activities. Mr. Klassen stands directly in the finest of social gospel traditions that in the past have included such legendary giants as J. S. Woodsworth and T. C. Douglas.

It brings me great pleasure to take this time to recognize the volunteer work of Mr. Menno Klassen, who has selflessly given and continues to give his time and energies to others in need. Thank you, Menno. You are an inspiration to all of us.

Emergency Preparedness Week

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Mr. Speaker, this being Emergency Preparedness Week, I rise today to remind all Manitobans about the importance of being prepared for an emergency. Emergency Preparedness Week is held annually across the country to raise public awareness of the importance of planning and emergency planning for emergencies. With this year's theme being "Together We Prepare," I encourage all Manitobans to work together to ensure our province is ready to respond should an emergency situation arise.

I also encourage this Government to address the dangerous shortage of ambulances in the city of Winnipeg. With the city's ambulance service already stretched to the limit, the city would be placed in a very dangerous situation should a natural disaster strike.

Manitobans know all too well the devastating effects of the flooding and forest fires. With the very dry spring we have been experiencing, forest fires especially are a major cause for concern. We should also remember the risks associated with severe weather, like hailstorms or tornadoes that can accompany Manitoba summers.

By identifying potential risks, planning ahead and being prepared, we may reduce the chances of a disaster or emergency situation from occurring, and we will ensure that we can recover more quickly and minimize the damage should one occur. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

St. Vital Historical Society

Ms. Linda Asper (Riel): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I received the May 2000 issue of *The St. Vital Historian* newsletter of the St. Vital Historical Society that is edited by Hugh R. Kennedy. The newsletter reminded me of the vital role that the society plays in bringing history to the St. Vital community.

Led by Gordon Hancock, President and a founding member of the society, who at this time is in hospital and needs our prayers, and his executive of Charles Smeaton, Vice-President, Audrey Wilford, Treasurer, Charell De Beer, Secretary, and Lorna Miner, Membership Chair, the society offers several programs. These include school visits, bringing St. Vital history to the classroom, building a well-organized archives and artifacts collection and display boards in local libraries.

The society has presented shows this year on the 1950 flood and on Boy Scouts and Girl Guides. It has published a souvenir booklet on the 50th anniversary of the 1950 Red River flood.

Thanks to the society and its volunteers, history is being preserved in the St. Vital area. Its newsletter highlights recollections such as those of Cornelius Derksen, who recalls that, in 1943, "we bought 15 acres of bush land on St. Mary's Road south of Meadowood Avenue to build a house. The basement was started on September 28, using horses and a scoop and shovel." Little did he know that I would be born a few months later and have my Riel constituency office located there some 50 years later.

The society spring tea will be held on May 6 from 1 to 4 at Faith Lutheran Church on Dakota. All members are welcome to attend and join my colleague from St. Vital and me in the tea pouring.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MATTER OF GRIEVANCE**Doris Mae Oulton**

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Mr. Speaker, I wanted to take this opportunity in the House to put a few words on the record regarding a very accomplished human being that I think needs the kind of recognition that I am going to put on the record today, a woman who has had an exemplary career of 16 years within the provincial civil service, having served in many different capacities and under different administrations within the Province of Manitoba, first being hired in 1984 under Howard Pawley's administration as an economic development officer.

I should indicate that it is Doris Mae Oulton that I am speaking about today. I should start off by saying that the way that she was dismissed from the civil service will not allow her or afford her the opportunity to be recognized by her peers within the civil service in the same manner as she would have been should she have retired after her career of civil service.

I think it is important that the record shows that there are many members of this Legislature and many members of the civil service that would want her honoured and recognized in this way, especially since she was recognized in such a formal, public way by her peers and by members of the community just last evening when she received recognition as a Woman of Distinction at the YM-YWCA Women of Distinction Awards Dinner. So I thought it would be very appropriate to take my time in the Legislature to speak to her accomplishments and encourage her to hold her head high and realize and recognize that it was her peers in the community that recognized her and that it was her peers in the community that will be able to encourage her to continue on to do good work, the kinds of good work that she has done over the past many years.

Mr. Speaker, I will go on to indicate again that she was hired within the provincial civil service in 1984 and served as a business development officer for a period of time when the Pawley Government saw fit to promote her to become the Executive Director of the

Women's Directorate within government, and there she started along her career path in the provincial civil service to perform responsibilities that would lead to the betterment of the lives of many women within our province.

But that was not where her career and support in serving women started. She began her active career in promoting women's issues at the National Film Board, where she designed the national promotion of the group of films on Women and Work. She was part of the group that founded Studio D, the women's studio at the board. She was one of the co-authors of the first national agreement to prevent violence against women when our Government became the Government, and that was back in 1989.

She carried forward in her duties and, along with Minister Gerrie Hammond when she was responsible for the Status of Women, Doris Mae was given the task of undertaking the Women's Initiative where she travelled right across this province, never afraid to roll up her sleeves and get out there in the community and talk to women and really understand what the issues were. As a result of that, she completed the report, wrote the report, and really had an impact on the policies and the programs that were developed in the early '90s in support of women who needed the kinds of services that government should be providing. She was, in no small part, responsible for the initiatives that stabilized funding for women's shelters in the province of Manitoba. She was part of the Family Court implementation committee. She saw the development of a successful model to expedite changes on domestic abuse.

It was under her leadership as the first Assistant Deputy Minister of the Women's Directorate—and I want to indicate that it was our Government that raised the senior position within the women's area of government from an executive director of the Women's Directorate to an Assistant Deputy Minister level, showing the recognition and the importance that we placed on issues surrounding women. It was under Doris Mae's leadership in that position that a number of major developments occurred, including Manitoba's policy for women, a policy for aboriginal women, the engendering change poster series and the provincial co-operation for

the December 14 memorial at the Legislative grounds.

* (14:50)

Mr. Speaker, there were many, many accomplishments and many new programs initiated under the leadership of the Minister at the time, Gerrie Hammond, and Doris Mae Oulton as the Assistant Deputy Minister. We recognized her skills and her abilities, and when it came time to look at Manitoba negotiating its own immigration agreement with the federal Government, we recognized the qualities that Doris Mae Oulton had and asked her to take on the challenge of amalgamating from four different departments within government the Citizenship Division under Culture, Heritage and Citizenship.

Doris Mae was given the responsibility of Assistant Deputy Minister at that time of negotiating the first immigration agreement between Manitoba and Canada. She undertook that assignment with enthusiasm and with gusto, and I think that we were able to accomplish significant things as a result. During her time as the Assistant Deputy Minister of Citizenship, we were looking at some initiatives that might look at dealing with single parents who needed some additional supports in order to move into the workforce. We were looking at creating some new programming within government.

So, in addition to her citizenship responsibilities, Doris Mae Oulton undertook a consultation process within the community and really enabled us to develop the Taking Charge! Program, which was the joint initiative between the federal and provincial governments that saw single parents with children able to access the training opportunities, the child care, and the additional supports that would help move them off of welfare and into the workforce. So she was a woman of many talents, and she made many significant contributions in that area also.

Once the immigration agreement was signed with the federal Government and we were looking again at creating some additional programs for children and youth within the province, Doris Mae rose to the top as far as people who we wanted to look at to move into a

new structure, which was the Children and Youth Secretariat. She was very, very instrumental in working with the community, consulting with the community, listening to what the community had to say, and then bringing to our Government initiatives that truly would be community driven and would see additional supports put in place for children and families within the province of Manitoba.

From 1995 until just some short month or so ago, Doris Mae Oulton performed the duties of chief executive officer of the Children and Youth Secretariat. Under her leadership there, Mr. Speaker, she was responsible for developing a strategy for children and youth in the province of Manitoba. She was responsible for the ChildrenFirst initiative that saw many programs that looked at supports for children right from birth up into school age years and much beyond. When there were children with special needs within our education system, the Secretariat was charged with trying to co-ordinate programs between departments.

Interesting to note, Mr. Speaker, that the Children and Youth Secretariat was arm's length from any department within government, and that was done for a specific purpose. That was to try to ensure that departments would come together, government departments would co-operate one with another, that we would break down the barriers that did exist and try to ensure that we were dealing with the whole child and the whole family rather than bits and pieces of children and families.

I have to indicate that it was no easy undertaking, because she was acting as a chief executive officer and trying to get deputy ministers from several different departments to co-operate and to work together to ensure that the programs and initiatives were very holistic in approach. She did a wonderful job, although very frustrated from time to time, because things did not move as quickly as she would have liked them to have moved.

She was not the traditional bureaucrat. She worked in non-traditional ways, if I might say, sometimes, and that sometimes is a bit frustrating for those that worked in the system. But her main focus and her main priority was to

get the programs and the initiatives up and running for the sake of children and families in this province, and she did an excellent job.

So, as a result, we had many programs that were introduced like BabyFirst and EarlyStart, the Women and Infant Nutrition Program.

She was our lead person at the national level for the National Children's Agenda. She worked very aggressively on the National Child Benefit to see that it was implemented and integrated into our system here in the province of Manitoba.

She made significant contributions to the lives of many women, many children and many families in our province. I want to take this time to recognize her here in this House and ensure that all Manitobans know that we value the contribution of many senior civil servants within our bureaucracy.

I have to say that no government can do it alone, and no one minister can do things alone. I say many, many times, very publicly, that a government or a minister is only as good as the people that surround them. I have to believe that we were truly blessed, as I know the Pawley Government felt they were truly blessed, with the calibre and the qualifications of a person like Doris Mae Oulton that was able to move programs and policies and take direction and implement things that would better the lives of Manitoba women and Manitoba families.

So I want to salute her today, but I do say it is a sad day for Manitoba, especially after the recognition that she received as a result of her nomination by the University Women's Club, who I think plays a significant role in the lives of many women, brings women together, and on behalf of her staff in the Secretariat. I want to say her staff were fiercely, fiercely supportive of Doris Mae Oulton. I am hoping that the Government of today will not be looking to any of those other women and looking at firing them unceremoniously the way they fired Doris Mae Oulton.

They have done a disservice to her, and we will ensure that women in Manitoba know how insensitive and how uncaring and how shabbily

they treated someone who has the stature and the recognition and the ability, Mr. Speaker, but I know that the community recognition that she got last night will be able to help her pick up the pieces and get on with her life.

I say shame to a government who talks a lot about their treatment of women but actually deals with women, long-time career civil servants, in the manner in which Doris Mae Oulton was treated. I have to say I would not want to be a woman in that government today and have to take a back seat to the kinds of comments we heard today from members on the Government side that really have done a disservice to all Manitoba women by their treatment of someone that certainly did not deserve that kind of treatment. The community knows, and her peers know, her value and her quality, and it is sad to see the Government of the day does not recognize that. Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Steve Ashton (Deputy Government House Leader): Could you please call bills in the following order, second readings for Bill 10 followed by Bill 11, and, after that, Mr. Speaker, could you please call the government motion of the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) adjourned in the name of the Member for Dauphin-Roblin (Mr. Struthers).

SECOND READINGS

Bill 10—The Cooperatives Amendment Act

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin), that Bill 10, The Cooperatives Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les coopératives), be now read for a second time and be referred to a Committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Lemieux: I am pleased to speak about Bill 10, The Cooperatives Amendment Act. The Bill will make some minor amendments to The Cooperatives Act, which was proclaimed July 1, 1999. The Act changed the definition of "Auditor" from the definition in the previous

Cooperatives Act. We are proposing to broaden the definition to allow Federated Co-ops to continue to provide audited services to other co-operatives.

* (15:00)

Another proposed amendment concerns the notice of termination of membership. The new Act provides that the member be notified of the termination in the same way that the members are notified of a meeting of members. Some retail co-operatives specify that notices of meetings of members are to be posted at the co-operative's place of business and published in the newspaper. These are not appropriate ways to notify a member of termination of membership. The amendment will provide for this notice to be sent by mail. Mr. Speaker, the co-operative sector has recommended these amendments, and I am pleased to submit them for consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Jim Penner (Steinbach): I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire), that debate for Bill 10 be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 11—The Winnipeg Stock Exchange Restructuring and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), that Bill 11, The Winnipeg Stock Exchange Restructuring and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi sur la restructuration de la Bourse de Winnipeg et modifications corrélatives), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Lemieux: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the prompting from the members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to make some comments about The Winnipeg Stock Exchange Restructuring and Consequential

Amendments Act. This bill has been requested by the Board of Governors and members of the Winnipeg Stock Exchange. It will allow the Winnipeg Stock Exchange to merge with the Canadian Venture Exchange, CDNX.

In 1999 the Canadian stock exchanges were restructured with each exchange focussing its operation on a specific portion of the market. The Toronto Stock Exchange lists senior companies; the Montreal Stock Exchange deals in options and futures; and the Vancouver Stock Exchange and Alberta Stock Exchange merged to form the Canadian Venture Exchange, or CDNX, to list emerging companies and venture capital companies.

Mr. Speaker, the CDNX wishes to establish a regional office in Winnipeg. This bill repeals the existing Winnipeg Stock Exchange Act, as that legislation does not contemplate the winding up of the exchange or divestiture of its assets or operations.

Under the proposed act, the Winnipeg Stock Exchange will be able to continue as a private corporation under The Corporations Act. This will permit the Stock Exchange to be wound down and to effect the transfer of its assets to CDNX.

This bill also proposes changes to The Income Tax Act to allow the continuation of the Manitoba equity tax credit, currently given to the purchasers of shares in Manitoba companies exclusively listed on the Winnipeg Stock Exchange by extending the credit to shares listed on the exchange operating in Manitoba. This exchange will be the CDNX.

The merger of the Winnipeg Stock Exchange with the Canadian Venture Exchange, with an active Winnipeg office, will benefit Manitobans and Manitoba companies. Manitoba investors will have increased liquidity in their shares in Manitoba corporations. Manitoba companies will have a national market for their securities.

We have consulted with the Board of Governors of the Winnipeg Stock Exchange and representatives of the Canadian Venture Exchange. They support the legislation totally.

I look forward to the swift passage of this bill so that the Winnipeg Stock Exchange can proceed to implement its agreement to merge with the Canadian Venture Exchange. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Jim Penner (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, in regard to Bill 11, members of the Winnipeg Stock Exchange have endorsed a recommendation to consolidate its trading and listing services with the recently formed Canadian Venture Exchange, or CDN-X. The CDN-X was originally created when the Vancouver and Alberta stock exchanges merged.

The Winnipeg Stock Exchange, since its foundation in 1903, has evolved into one of the smallest functioning stock exchanges in the world. It has maintained its operations by focussing on growing Manitoba companies who, if successful to the point of requiring a greater market, can be interlisted on larger exchanges. The premier example of one such company is the Great-West Life Assurance Company.

After a period of slow activity from the 1970s through the early 1990s, the Winnipeg Stock Exchange has recently been reactivated as a modern, fully electronic stock exchange. The proposed merger with the CDN-X is the next step in this revitalization.

Two key programs that the Winnipeg Stock Exchange had initiated, the Keystone Company Policy and the tax credit program, will be retained under the auspices of the Canadian Venture Exchange. These initiatives were designed to help small Manitoba firms get financing during their early development. They will be grandfathered into the CDN-X with only one minor alteration.

When the amalgamation of the two exchanges is complete, Winnipeg Stock Exchange investors will continue to have access to most of the currently listed companies as well as a further 2300 already listed on the Canadian Venture Exchange. The CDN-X will also include small-cap listings from the Montreal Stock Exchange and the Canadian Dealing Network.

A major benefit of the proposed merger is the national exposure that Manitoba companies

will receive. WSE officials have stated that the national market will provide much greater liquidity and a larger distribution system for new public equity issues than the WSE could offer on its own. Manitoba entrepreneurs will now have ready access to investors in B.C. and Alberta with Saskatchewan, Ontario and Québec soon to follow.

The merger agreement includes a provision that the CDN-X will maintain an administrative office in Winnipeg for at least 10 years. This preserves a regional influence for Winnipeg and will allow for smooth transition from the WSE to the CDN-X. The exchange already has offices in Calgary and Vancouver and will be opening one in Toronto soon. CDN-X will hire three permanent WSE staff members to form the exchange's Winnipeg office. This office will be complemented by a regional advisory board thereby further enhancing the Manitoba dimension.

In an age of globalization and heightened awareness of international trade, the WSE-CDN-X merger is a prudent step towards providing Manitoba entrepreneurs, business and investors the base from which to involve themselves on an international level. The Winnipeg Stock Exchange was fulfilling an important function in fostering Manitoba business, but with the scale of economics at this time, it is very reasonable that a larger-picture approach be taken. The best of both worlds can be achieved.

This change will no doubt enhance Manitoba's financial capabilities and provide greater exposure to the province's growing business community. The move to join the CDN-X can only be viewed as a positive one. Since the previous government initiated this process and as a result of discussions with the chairman of the Manitoba Security Exchange, I and the party that I represent are favourable towards quick passage of this bill.

* (15:10)

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading of Bill 11, The Winnipeg Stock Exchange Restructuring and Consequential

Amendments Act. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

GOVERNMENT MOTION

Federal Reparation for 1999 Farmland Flooding

Mr. Speaker: To resume debate on the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Food (Ms. Wowchuk), standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Dauphin-Roblin who has 25 minutes remaining.

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin-Roblin): I appreciate the opportunity to conclude the remarks that I started yesterday on the agricultural resolution, the amendment brought forward by the Member for Emerson (Mr. Jack Penner), and, of course, the original motion brought forward by our Minister of Agriculture.

I want to begin by helping the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Filmon) by directing his attention to page 791 of yesterday's Hansard, May 3, 2000. I want him to note a ministerial statement that was made yesterday which the Leader of the Opposition today, I think unfortunately so, seemed to infer was an act of filibustering on our part. Well, Mr. Speaker, the ministerial statement that was brought forward yesterday was brought forward by the Minister of Highways and Government Services (Mr. Ashton). It dealt with the very topic that this resolution deals with. It deals with the plight of farmers in southwest Manitoba. It deals with the hardship that farm communities and farm families have been dealing with since the inundation of water in the southwest part of the province.

We have been fighting and arm-twisting and persuading and doing everything we can as a government, as part of a coalition in this province, to make the federal Government understand it has to take its responsibilities in this matter seriously. We brought forward a ministerial statement yesterday toward that end, and I do not know where the Leader of the

Opposition gets off referring to that as filibustering.

Mr. Speaker, the approach of the Opposition is absolutely ridiculous on an issue in which we should be standing shoulder to shoulder on an issue in which there is a coalition built in this province to help out the people in the southwest part of this province. On an issue of this importance, the former Premier of this province refers to our ministerial statement as filibustering. That is a shameful approach on the part of this Opposition.

Yesterday, myself, as well as many other speakers, talked in terms of fairness for the farmers and businesses and communities in the southwest part of Manitoba. We talked about fair treatment between that part of the country with the Red River after its flood in 1997. We talked about fairness with the Saguenay floods and the Québec ice storm. We talked about fairness in terms of the federal Government treating the parts of federal disaster assistance that requires a 90-10 percent split, and we talked about parts that would receive a 50-50 split. Just like they did in other catastrophes in this country, we want the federal Government to be consistent and fair with our producers here in Manitoba, particularly in the southwest part of our province.

What else do we get from this Opposition? We get the most bizarre negotiating strategy that I have seen in my life. It makes no sense, Mr. Speaker, for this Government to approach the federal Government in a weakened counter-productive manner. What the Opposition wants us, as a government, to do is say give us a 90-10 split. No. No. But if you do not do that, give us a 50-50 split, but if you do not do that, we are going to pay the whole shot here in Manitoba. Can you imagine if negotiations in the province were to go on like this in other areas? Just think for a minute if you will of a salary negotiation on behalf of teachers in the province. A school division sits down to negotiate with their local teachers, and the school divisions says: Look, you teachers, you cannot be asking for a lot of money. We do not have it in our budget. We want you to take a 2% cut. If you do not want that, if you cannot put up with the 2% cut, our fallback position is a wage freeze. By the way, if

you do not take a wage freeze, we are going to up your salaries 2 percent. Conversely, can you imagine the teachers' negotiating team going in with exactly the same approach as what this Opposition is asking us to do in its amendment and saying to the school boards, we want a 5% increase in our salary? If that does not work, we are going to go up to a 7% increase in our salary. If you do not take that, we want a 9% increase.

My advice to the Opposition is do not undermine our position. Do not undermine the position that has been put together through a coalition of Manitobans, a coalition of the people out there including the Keystone Agricultural Producers, the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, the National Farmers Union. The list goes on of the groups that have gone to Ottawa, who have come to Winnipeg, who have agitated in their communities, who have agitated from the farm gates onward. We have gone forward with an absolutely unified position, and now what do we see from the Opposition? We see an Opposition party who is backing off, who is letting the federal Government off the hook, and that is not right. That is not the best thing on behalf of Manitoba farmers and the communities who have suffered over the past while because of excessive moisture.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to ask that the members opposite rise above the temptation to play politics on this issue. There come times, and being an opposition member from '95 to 1999 in this House, I realize that there come times when you have to decide based on the merit of an issue. You have to choose the approach that you are going to take, and is that approach going to be one in which we support the good work of a government, the good work of a coalition and be a positive force for the benefit of farmers, or will you decide to destroy the work that has gone on already? Will you decide for your own political gain that you are going to pull back from this coalition, you are going to pull back from the good work that has been done so far? Are you going to jeopardize the position of a Manitoba coalition just so that you can go around in the rural communities and try to make a case that this Government does not stand for farmers?

Your choice: Are you going to be united and work hard on behalf of farmers? Are you going to step above the partisanship of this House and above the partisanship that usually predominates in Manitoba politics, or will you succumb to the lowest common denominator? Will you simply slip back into the cold comforts, the cold routine of being negative, of criticizing, of not helping? That is the question that this Opposition faces today.

* (15:20)

My advice is that the Opposition should take the former of those two options. Join with our Minister in demanding from the federal Government that they take their responsibility seriously in this matter, and then at the end of the day we will gain for the farmers in the southwest, for the communities in the southwest, for families all throughout the areas suffering because of excessive moisture, we will gain for them what they justly deserve.

I look forward to that assistance and that co-operation from the members opposite. I rely on their ability to think in a common-sense, co-operative way, and, Mr. Speaker, I am sure that they will do the right thing. Thank you very much for your time today.

Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale): Mr. Speaker, I would like to just put a few words on record in regard to the resolution that has been brought forth. The reason that I wanted to bring forth some words is the fact that I have listened to some of the members opposite talk about working with the federal Government to get money before they start with any program, whether it is a 50-50 program or a 90-10 program, and that all these things have to fall in place before this provincial Government will come to the table with any money to help the farmers in the southwest with the terrible situation of the flooding.

Mr. Conrad Santos, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

I have to remind the members opposite that it was this Government, when the forest fires ravaged the North, that moved full bore to help to evacuate, to fight the fires, and spent tens of

millions of dollars to have the forest fire get that done. That was done unilaterally by the Government of the day, which was our Government, the Government of Gary Filmon at that time.

At that time, there was no quibbling over who would pay the bill. It was to help the people who were in distress, help the people who were in trouble and make it happen. We knew that there was a possibility that we would have to go through this before, but we went to the federal Government after the fact to get the 90-10 formula in after we had evacuated all these people. We fought for two and a half years with the Brian Mulroney Government at that time to get the money, but we got it.

This Government here now is sitting back on its laurels saying that, well, we have to have everything in place before we go to get the money. I am saying this Government is looking at it in the wrong light. They should be looking at the fact that to help these people who are in desperate need to do it now, then fight the federal Government for the money, because if the case is won and if there is strength and there is a conviction by that Government on that side of the House to make it happen, it will happen. But I can only see that they do not have the initiative. They do not have the backbone. They do not have the type of whatever they call it to make things happen because—

An Honourable Member: Internal fortitude.

Mr. Reimer: Internal fortitude, if you want to call it that, because to help the people of Manitoba when the forest fires were ravaging the North, we went out there and made it happen, evacuated the people, fought the fires. It cost tens of millions of dollars. It was declared a disaster, and then we went and got the money from the federal Government and fought for two-and-a-half years. I just want to point that out to the members opposite saying that there is a way to have it done. There just does not seem to be a will on that part of the Government to make it happen. I am saying that is shameful.

Mr. Denis Rocan (Carman): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased today to stand and speak to the amendment that was brought forward by

my friend the Honourable Member for Emerson (Mr. Jack Penner).

As we all know, the last two years have been a particularly dark period for producers in Manitoba. Farmers have always seen their share of rough times, but the disasters that have befallen them this last while have delivered substantial and prolonged hardships for all involved. The causes of their difficulties are clear—substantial rainfall, poor drainage and debilitating commodity prices are obvious culprits. Unfortunately, the solutions to these problems are not rapidly forthcoming.

The discussions that have been going on for some time now between different jurisdictions about who was to deliver aid and how much they are to deliver are becoming increasingly irrelevant. In fact, I would go as far as to say that the wrangling over how these crises are to be addressed has become part of the problem. On one hand, we have a federal Government that has been obstinate when it comes to lending a hand. On the other hand, we have a provincial Government that is repeatedly demanding their assistance. I am convinced that this dialogue has its place in certain context, but we have now passed out of such a context.

Unfortunately, as this debate labours on, we continue to have producers that are in dire financial straits. Quite frankly, all the debate in the world, no matter how well intentioned, will not put a crop in the ground. There appears to be a deadlock, Mr. Deputy Speaker, between the federal and provincial Governments with each side casting blame on the other. I am dismayed to say that I think that perhaps their inability to come to terms may reflect the level of concern that they have for Manitoba's ravaged farms. The arguments put forth by members opposite in order to debate with the federal Government are fast becoming a broken record. This has been nothing short of all talk and no action scenario. Of course, this situation is unacceptable to the affected producers and those who count on them for support, and I might note that it has been for some time now.

Not very many days ago, these men and women brought their cause to the steps of this Legislature. They called on this Government for

action, immediate and effective action. It is getting desperately late for many of them. Spring seeding is fully upon us, bringing with it the primary costs of farming—seed, fertilizer, fuel, equipment maintenance, taxes and all the other expenses producers face at this time of the year, and they are taking their annual share of producers limited resources. So I think it is entirely reasonable for them to expect fair compensation at this time. It has been a year since the rains that precipitated this crisis fell, yet producers carry on without due compensation.

I want to call on the Minister of Agriculture to take action to afford the producers in question the assistance that they deserve. Certainly, it is a fine effort and a noble effort for her to time and time again plead their case to our colleagues in Ottawa, but now it is time for real action. Our administration was ready to give these farmers the hand up that they needed. In June of last year, we went to bat for the farmers and set up programs to help them get back on their feet. We also went to the federal Government to bring them on board in assisting those in need, but when a positive response was not immediately forthcoming, we kept our end of the bargain anyway.

There must be a revitalization so that this debate is not completely a matter of who pays for what and how much but when the farmers who are struggling are going to get the help that they need. The only answer they deserve to hear is now. There is no more time to debate and dicker. It is simply time to resolve this issue once and for all. Clearly, the amount of assistance that has been provided to the affected producers has been insufficient. It is vital that this Government makes a real commitment to supporting the farmers of this province. Indications are that the federal Government would have been willing to engage the province in a 50-50 cost share program. Whether the members opposite like it or not, this may ultimately have to be the solution as it seems support is not forthcoming under the DFAA.

In the unfortunate event that the Manitoba Government fails to come to agreement with the federal Government, they need to be ready to take swift, albeit somewhat late, action of their

own. As they well know, we do have a Fiscal Stabilization Fund in this province and supporting farmers through this disaster situation is certainly something worthy of those monies.

In closing, I would like to once again call on the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) and in fact the First Minister (Mr. Doer) to acknowledge the inadequacy of the funds provided thus far by them to flooded producers. There needs to be a real commitment by this administration to these individuals and their communities. We on this side realize that time has grown short and that action must be taken with or without the federal Government.

I would like to thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for giving me the few moments. Thank you.

* (15:30)

Hon. Jean Friesen (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I, too, am very glad to have the opportunity to say a few words on both the motion and on the amendment. Unfortunately, as I am sure the members opposite recognize, we will not be supporting this amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I welcome the chance to debate this issue, because I think it is important and it does highlight the very striking differences between us. I think a number of members on our side have talked very well about the kinds of negotiating strategy and the approach to the federal Government that the Opposition would have us use.

It seems to me that what they are suggesting is not the way in which we are going to best help these farmers of southwestern Manitoba. It also raises another point which I think has also been recognized by people across Manitoba and particularly by the farmers in the southwest, and that is that what the Opposition has chosen to do is to make this an issue that is not a unified issue. That, I think, is a striking departure from some of the ways in which we have been able to work as a province with interest groups, with citizens, with active organizations and across all sides of this Legislature.

It is not just in the partisan nature of this House that I am saying that, but I would want to quote from the *Brandon Sun*, for example, which pointed out that "it's unfortunate Tory Agriculture critic Jack Penner"—oh, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am quoting—"the Tory Agriculture critic"—and I should not use his name—"has chosen to inject partisan rhetoric into the issue of flood aid for southwestern Manitoba. It's cheap politics," they said, "and we hoped political leaders in this province were above that."

I think what the *Brandon Sun* and many of the other rural newspapers as well are asking us to do is to be united, to be together on this, to give the best position and the best face and the best and most united argument that we can make to Ottawa, because clearly we are meeting with very strong resistance in Ottawa. At various times, they have said that, yes, this was a disaster. At other times, they have said that, no, there is no assistance for the farmers of southwestern Manitoba. For many months, in fact, the ministers from the federal Government chose to bypass southwestern Manitoba. They were not actually out there meeting with them. If there were deputations going across the country talking about agriculture, they certainly were not stopping in southwestern Manitoba.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think in recent months the federal Government has spoken to farmers in southwestern Manitoba. I met myself with the federal Minister for Rural Development, and we spoke about southwestern Manitoba. I congratulated him on meeting with the people of that area. He had meetings in Morris, and he had meetings elsewhere in southwestern Manitoba. I thought it was very important that the federal Government hear, in some cases for the first time and in some cases more frequently, the voice of the farmers of southwestern Manitoba. So that unified voice, I think, is a very important element of any provincial dealing, any provincial negotiation with the federal Government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that Manitobans generally understand the issues in southwestern Manitoba. This is not just one part of the province, but it is an issue, I think, that the farmers have been able to bring to the steps of the Legislature, that they have been able to express through the media in many different

ways over the last many months. I think that their voice has found a very strong resonance in Manitoba generally because there, I think, are few people in Manitoba now, especially after the 1997 flood, who do not understand the nature of a crisis such as this. Everyone in the surrounding areas of Winnipeg—let us say 60 to 70 percent of the population of Manitoba—faced on a daily basis in those months the prospect of a flood in the Red River Valley. Winnipeg, as we know, came very close to an extraordinary major disaster. So I think people in the southern part of the province understand very clearly what it means to face that kind of scale of disaster.

In other parts of the province, the forest fires, over the last few years, have also brought to the attention, not just of those people who have experienced them, but their families, their network of family people across northern Manitoba who have taken them in and who understand what it means to lose your home and potentially to lose your whole community.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what we are looking at in southwestern Manitoba is a disaster. Some elements of the federal Government have acknowledged that, and certainly the Province has, and I know that members on the other side see that as well. I do not want to take away that argument from them.

There was a year, last year, when no crop was planted. That can be, I think, no more devastating for any community to know that there is no seed in the ground, that there is no harvest to be harvested, that there is no money for the kinds of things that you need for next year's crop.

In earlier times, a year of no crop or a year of no harvest was something which became recorded, whether it was on the Bayeux Tapestry, whether it was on the cave paintings, or whether it is in the legends of Aboriginal people of both Canada and Manitoba; the years when, for example, the caribou herds would not return in northern Manitoba; the years in the Yukon and in northern British Columbia when there were both major floods and, in fact, major volcanic eruptions. These become, in fact, the markers of history for every community. They are very, very significant. A year in which no

crop is planted, I think, has a tremendous impact, not just on individual farmers, which, I am sure, the members opposite would recognize, but it has a tremendous impact upon the sense of community and the sense of possibilities for the future. We in rural Manitoba, generally, as are many rural communities, are facing over and over again that sense of a vision for the future. So it is very crucial for rural communities generally but specifically for southwestern Manitoba to, I think, experience such a sense of a disaster.

In previous years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, across the Canadian federation, we have grown over the years, particularly since the 1940s, since mid-century, to socialize the risk, to share the risk. That is what we have done with our agreements with the federal Government. It is what we have done through transfer payments. It is what we have done in so many areas to redistribute the wealth of one area to assist others. We do it throughout the whole federal principle of assistance to different regions of the country, as well as in particular programs.

That is an important principle in the sense of nation. A nation is people who have done great things together in the past, and that together is an important aspect of that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and who intend to do great things together in the future. The definition is often used in marriage, but it is also the definition that is used for a nation. That sense of shared risk, that sense of responsibility for those who are experiencing something which is beyond their control is a very important element of what Canada has become at the end of the 20th century.

We have done it in so many other areas as well, in co-ops, in insurance, in credit unions. That ability for a community to share the risk, from a community level right through to the federal level, that sense of the nature of a particular community which looks after those who cannot help themselves and the sense of region and the sense of disaster comes to the aid of others. We did and we were glad to when it came to the Saguenay and to the ice storm that was experienced throughout eastern Canada. Yes, those were disasters. Those were tragedies for many of those communities. In the case of the ice storm, for particular families it was

enormously stressful, and I think has had some very long-term effects in some particular communities. So that sense of the nation, the sense of the federation is something that we are addressing here as well.

We have, our Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) and the minister in charge of emergency services, the Minister of Highways and Government Services (Mr. Ashton) have taken this responsibility very seriously and have spoken over and over again, not just to farmers, not just to the people in southwestern Manitoba, but have taken that message to Ottawa. How much better it would have been, how much stronger we would have been if that had been a unified message. So, I have some concerns about speaking to this amendment, which I think is the issue which divides us and is one that I think the Opposition should have thought very, very carefully about before they brought in such an amendment.

* (15:40)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that sense of Canada which I talked about I think is something that perhaps has a very great significance. I want to perhaps put on the record my disappointment at the response of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Filmon), this afternoon, to the potential news and the loss of the CBC. Again, there is another national institution that we share, that has important significance at the local level in news, as it used to have in drama and film and in music. It is an institution which has been whittled away and was one of the ways in which the nation was able to speak to each other and to share those common values and to extend them and to develop them.

I was extremely disappointed that the Leader of the Opposition took that opportunity to speak of that as trivial, to attempt to suggest that the Minister of Culture and Heritage (Ms. McGifford) should not be reading her letter to the federal Minister into the record, thus depriving people at home, who were watching this on television at the time, the opportunity to hear what their Minister had written on their behalf.

So I think perhaps we are developing here a different sense of nation between the two sides

of this House. That would be very unfortunate. I hope it is not the case, and I hope these are both isolated events, but they do in many ways speak to the same principles. I think the Conservative Party, what is left of it, as it metamorphoses into something else, may indeed want to take this as a very serious concern.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, since last April, when we were Opposition, we raised questions in the Legislature on a regular basis on the flooding of the southwest. We attended farm rallies, which attracted over 1000 farmers.

Since taking office both of our ministers, as I mentioned before, have pursued this issue with the federal ministers responsible for different parts of this. We have gone to Ottawa. We have taken united groups to Ottawa. We have written letters to Ottawa. We are continuing to fight this. We had hoped that we could have fought this on the basis of unity, on a unified basis. So it is with regret that I am unable to support this amendment.

Mr. Harry Schellenberg (Rossmere): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to rise to speak on this amended motion. The issue is the farmers in the central and southwest area of Manitoba who were unable to seed last year as a result of the 1999 flood. This area had 500 percent more rainfall than usual. Over one million acres went unseeded. The economy of the region is suffering, at risk, and I would like to relate to you why I am interested in this topic and this region.

I grew up on a family farm, as I have said before, five miles north of Boissevain, right in the middle of the southwest. My family has experienced crop failure as a result of drought, hail and too much rainfall, so a disaster is nothing new for myself or my family. We have experienced it quite often. However, there is a difference today. For instance, today, farmers need more capital and you can go bankrupt much quicker. So, I would say in the early '50s, in that era, you could get away with a crop failure much better, but today that is not the case.

Farmers want assistance for the 1999 flood, as they did in the 1997 Red River flood, and we

must remember that the 1999 flood was a far greater disaster than the '97 flood. The federal Government dealt very well with the 1996 Saguenay River flood. They dealt fairly well with the 1997 Red River Valley flood, and, of course, they dealt very well with the 1998 eastern ice storms.

An Honourable Member: What about southwestern Manitoba?

Mr. Schellenberg: Yes, southwestern Manitoba, they seem to have different rules for some reason. That is what we in this Legislature will try and change or bring this to the attention of Ottawa.

The farmers' loss has been great in the 1999 flood. The farmers in the southwest have lost their chemical and their fertilizer input and have incurred extra costs to restore their land. Of course, they spent money on weed control, at the same time they had no crop to sell. They had no income. That is very hard for a family. My family has experienced that. It is very, very stressful. The farmers are between a rock and a hard place. They not only faced financial stress, but there is tremendous emotional stress on the family, on the children, if they go to university or whatever. A whole way of life is being, you might say, destroyed, and the family farm seems to be something on the way out, something of the past.

Our Minister responsible for emergency measures and the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), along with Premier Doer, have done an excellent job of representing the farmers. They have attended rallies; they have gone to Ottawa; they have written letters. I commend them for this good work. Farmers are turning to this Legislature for assistance. They want us to be the voice of the farmer, and after we have passed the motion supporting this, we can go to Ottawa and be their voice.

The problem seems to lie with the federal Government and not with the Province of Manitoba. This motion talks about an all-party co-operation on lobbying the federal Government for assistance. I hope people opposite, as well as the Liberal Leader (Mr. Gerrard), co-operate and support this motion. I

appreciated some of the remarks that the Liberal Leader made here yesterday, but I wish he would talk to his colleagues in Ottawa and explain the situation of the farmers in southwestern Manitoba. He sort of indicated, if I understood correctly, that he was going to go and speak to the Liberal Government in Ottawa. I hope he does, and I hope he brings a strong message to Ottawa.

Just an observation, in Question Period, agriculture seems to have been at the bottom of the list for the Opposition. Quite often they say it is a priority, but there are other things that seem to come first. That is just an observation that I have seen.

My friend the Member for Emerson (Mr. Jack Penner) seems to be fighting for the farmers, which is appreciated, but his attack should be directed at the federal Government who really have the money. They have got tremendous resources. They have billions in surplus, yet they forget the farmer in southwestern Manitoba.

Now, as a long-time teacher of Canadian history, I would like to draw on some historical precedents that have been set. I think some of them were mentioned here just recently. Often the West has been forgotten. There is alienation and so forth. During the 1930s the West suffered, and Ottawa ignored the problems the West faced. Farmers lost their farms; people lived on relief or were sent to work camps. That is about all Ottawa did for the West. Then the 1935 election came around, and R. B. Bennett was gone. The people never forgot the inaction during the 1930s. In fact, R. B. Bennett went to live in England. He could not face the Canadian people, the embarrassment.

There are many examples where we have helped fellow Canadians, and we are judged by how we treat others. The history of Canada has many examples of where we helped people in financial difficulties, and especially after the 1930s. As a result of the Depression, the Rowell-Sirois commission was established. Actually, what I am telling you here is what I taught my Grade 11 students in Canadian History, so I might give you a little history lesson here that I used to give at River East Collegiate.

* (15:50)

The Rowell-Sirois commission was created to study the Depression which came up with some recommendations. There were people who believed that this suffering should never happen again. Some excellent recommendations came out of the Rowell-Sirois commission. It was recognized that the provinces did not have the resources or the tax base, and therefore this helped bring about the Depression.

After the Rowell-Sirois Commission was completed, it recommended that unemployment insurance would be created. Today we have it in a different form, but that came out of the Depression. That is what we learnt out of the Depression where hungry men and women would not have to go to a soup kitchen or to relief camp. We wanted to stop that. Actually, it really served people for many years, and it is still serving very well.

Another recommendation was all debt from the provinces was to be taken over by the federal Government. They had the resource base, and it was a tremendous help to western Canada, especially Manitoba, and there was real change in leadership from Ottawa. After the Depression, our early '40s, we bring in Family Allowance. I remember my mother talking about it, and she mentioned that it was a great help to our family who were in poverty. It was a great help to all Canadians to have family allowances.

That is just one example. Also, the federal Government showed leadership in various other areas, but today the federal Government is not doing that. I will give you another example. The Pension Plan was brought in in the 1960s to alleviate poverty, financial stress. Of course, Tommy Douglas started in the 1940s, in '44 with medicare. That is a tremendous help for Canadians. We had equalization payments to help the areas that are less fortunate. We had transfer payments, which has been mentioned. We had sharing of various kinds in Canada. We were a different Canada after the Depression because we learned something, but today we have forgotten the lesson that we learned in the 1930s. We have forgotten that. We were going to make a new Canada, and we were, but today we seem to talk about globalization, privatiza-

tion, making more profits and so forth, and we have forgotten all about people.

The federal Government did much more. They built experimental farms to help people. They introduced new farming practices. They brought about new conservation methods to prevent further drought and erosion. There is a history since the Depression that the federal Government shows leadership when natural disaster strikes. That is not happening today. The new sense of Canada that came out of the Depression seems to be gone. We seem to be taking on the American model, and I am sorry to see that happen.

Now, the Member for Emerson (Mr. Jack Penner) says we should take money out of the Fiscal Stabilization Fund. Well, this fund was drained before the provincial election. As MTS was sold, we had over half a billion dollars there in that fund, and, today, well, there is very little left in that fund. That was the time to help the farmers. We had half a billion dollars there. Why did they not move? Also, as they were in power, they had the opportunity to help the farmers. Yes, they came across with \$70 million, which is \$50 an acre. I applaud that, but I spoke to some of the members opposite about this, and I pointed out why did you not add the other \$43 million or whatever you think should have been added? This should have been done right away if they thought that was right. The Member for Emerson had his opportunity when they were in power. They could have done that.

At the Melita meeting in 1999, our Leader supported the Premier of the day. There was no politics, and you know what? We had the same script as they did, and it was easy for the former Premier to support farmers with assistance because he had the support of the whole House. Members opposite are playing politics, and it is time for them to co-operate. The amendment made is undermining the united front of the Legislature. The rural MLAs in the last Government should have pressured former Premier Filmon to give the appropriate amount that they are now demanding.

I could go on, but I will conclude by saying this: Let us support our motion and, of course, defeat the amendment and send a strong message

to Ottawa and support the family farm. Remember, we are judged by how we treat others. Thank you.

Mr. Harry Enns (Lakeside): Mr. Deputy Speaker and colleagues, I have listened to a number of speeches on this important resolution that is before the House. Having had the privilege of having a hand in some measure, small as it was, during the time of the difficulties that we are speaking of, I am moved to make a few comments and put them on the record.

In fairness to my friend, the Honourable Minister, and to the Government, there has been a real problem in this area within the farm community. There are two crises, if you like, or two difficulties in the farm community. One has been an unacceptably low level of basic commodity prices. Wheat, canola, barley, oats, all prices have been in the tank for far too long. Regrettably, as it all too often is with agriculture, it is when other disasters loom on the horizon, like drought and the potential for a short crop that only now in the last few weeks, the last few days are we seeing some sign of upward activity in these basic commodity prices.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the point that I was trying to make is that, just at the time that we were trying to deal with the phenomenon and once in a lifetime, once in history experience that the southwest experienced, the fact that, as the last speaker simply said, he indicated the level of rainfall, unprecedented for the southwest, unprecedented for that disaster to have befallen that particular area, you know, at the same time that very tough times have fallen on agriculture generally speaking, particularly in the grain and oil seed sector, has fudged the two issues. That is why I will acknowledge, not without any hesitation, that is why the Minister and this Government have gone along with the support of other farm organizations to maintain or to enhance or to lengthen the AIDA support program.

* (16:00)

The AIDA support program was never designed for a disaster. The AIDA program was specifically designed to help the situation when farm incomes take an unacceptable drop, which

they have, generally speaking. Eighteen months ago, two years ago, it was hog prices, some of you will recall, that hit the tank. Quite frankly, the AIDA program worked very well for many hog producers. Regrettably, it does not work that well when you are talking about a cycle that is very often of six, and seven and eight years duration.

I say that this did the problems of the southwest no service when the two kind of meshed together. Understandably, these poor commodity prices, they impacted on farmers in Alberta, in Saskatchewan, in Ontario, right across the country. So, when specific attention or focus was needed on the unique situation in our southwestern part of the province, it did not always receive it and did not always get it. When we talked about dollars, when the Minister talks about coming home with another \$100 million for the AIDA program, that is not really talking about specific aid and support for the southwest. I give her full marks and I congratulate her. Our farmers need that extension of the AIDA program. Our farmers need that support, as long as we have the kind of wheat prices, the kind of canola prices, the kind of general grain and oil seed prices that we are currently facing, but it is not the specific kind of attention that in a true disaster is required.

I am satisfied that the Honourable Minister and her colleague, the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Ashton), are trying in fact to impress on members of the federal Government that it is a question of having the will to interpret what in fact constitutes a disaster and losses to disaster that could trigger the 90-10, could trigger the emergency monies that were applicable, and we often talk about it in the Red River Valley. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am going to be very careful when I speak about the Red River Valley because it can easily be misconstrued. I am well aware, having been a responsible minister back in '79 when we had a bad flood, being old enough to remember the '50 flood and actually having worked on the dikes and of course these other floods, the most recent one in '97, so I do not make light, not in the least bit, of the hardship, of the trauma, of people seeing what we did not see in the southwest, homes destroyed, farmsteads destroyed. I am aware that as Minister of Agriculture the concern

that farmers had. What do you do when all of a sudden you have to move 30 000 chickens? Or what do you do when you have to move 50, 60, 100 dairy cows? I would like to say: What do you do when you have to move a lot of hogs? But none of you people give a damn about hogs and so let the hogs drown, you know, but for the hogs and for all of these cases—*[interjection]* The Reverend tells me that that is being a little, a little—

An Honourable Member: Extreme.

Mr. Enns: Extreme. Okay, I withdraw that remark. My honourable friends, as a matter of fact, I particularly know that the Minister of Industry and Trade (Ms. Mihychuk) is appreciative of the fact and she listens to the increasing number of jobs that are available in the processing field in the agribusiness sector. That is why that remark was extreme.

But the point that I am making is, as a result in '97—and I am looking to my colleague—I think in a very short period of time, within a 12-month, 14-month period of time, over \$200 million, close to \$300 million of money came to the aid of the Red River Valley, and surprisingly, coincidentally, we are talking about just about the same size, roughly speaking the same size, roughly speaking a million acres the Red River Valley, roughly speaking a million acres in southwest that are in trouble. That \$300 million immediately went to work in the Red River Valley. It actually created a mini-boom in the Red River Valley. You could not find a contractor; you could not find a skilled tradesman that was needed. They all were working on rebuilding, re-establishing the damaged infrastructure of the Red River Valley flood, and the money was there, both federal and provincial dollars. Municipal dollars and private dollars were there as well to make that happen. At the end of the day the livestock got moved back to the farms; there were certainly losses in productivity, in production, but there was a program to compensate for that. Most amazingly of all, those innovative and hardworking farmers got virtually all of the million acres that were under water into seed that year and produced, I am not going to say a bumper crop, but I think an average crop, close to average, maybe a little below average, but a crop.

Now you put that next to what happened in the southwest, and that is what is hard to understand and what members opposite do not fully appreciate. You had the million acres taken out of production on, I am told, as high as 35 percent of them, expensive fertilizer spread, \$15, \$20, \$25 an acre, all of that lost. The condition of the land—just a soggy field—led to unprecedented weed growth which meant that to try to get that land in some shape for the coming year, excessive amount of tillage had to be undertaken, very often in concert with expensive chemical applications, to retard and to control the growth of weeds in these fields.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I understand and I accept the basic correctness of the Government's, of this Minister's position with respect to further support that the southwest part of this province requires and their stance, if you like, with the federal Government.

I object, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that even now 10 percent of something is better than nothing, and if, as we hear from the Premier (Mr. Doer), as we hear from other senior spokespersons of the Government, saying that they are prepared to enter into, for instance, an emergency program at a 90-10 sharing rate, then put out the 10 percent. Those programs like the JERI program were 50-50. You know, the formula was in place. Put out the 50 percent.

I really believe that there is precedent for the Government leading, if you like, and as my Leader indicated the other day in Question Period, forcing, embarrassing, pushing the federal Government to come and shoulder their fair share of the costs.

Several of my colleagues, I understand my colleague from Southdale and perhaps some other colleagues have referred to it—as a matter of fact, I know that the Member of the Liberal Party, the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) has referred to it in his comments on this bill, which could be used and seen as a precedent for the action that I am recommending the Government to take.

In 1979, I was just appointed—pardon me, 1989. When did we have the big fires?

An Honourable Member: '88.

Mr. Enns: In 1988, yes. In 1998, we had—it seems like natural disasters are always establishing greater and greater records—the worst fire season that the province has recorded. There were pictures of portions of our province burning on national and international television that describe the area of the fire as large as Prince Edward Island, the whole province. The whole north was an unacceptable haze of smoke cover. We faced, within days, the medical, the health needs of moving some close to 50 000 people out of their homes with helicopters, with airplanes, with cars, with trucks, with whatever we had. We found a home for them through the generosity of other communities, Portage la Prairie and some rural communities. Many of them came to Winnipeg, where they were housed and looked after for a period of one week, two weeks, three weeks. I cannot recall particularly the length of time, and it would have changed.

* (16:10)

Now, in a great number of these instances, we were dealing with First Nations people, whose responsibility for service is primarily that of the federal Government, and the federal Government understood that. In that very relatively short period of time, we racked up a fire bill in excess of \$77 million, \$78 million. Mr. Deputy Speaker, \$32 million, \$34 million were totally the responsibility of the federal Government, but we did not quibble and wait as to who should pay or who should not pay and leave the people in smoke and possible danger. The money was paid, the people were looked after, and we haggled with the federal Government for the next two years before we got it paid, and I might say it was a Conservative government that we were haggling with in Ottawa. It was my dear friend Mr. Mulroney that was owing, but we got it and we got every cent.

I am suggesting, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that with that kind of precedent, not in ancient history, but just a decade ago, that this Government could well roll up its sleeves and provide the kind of funding that is recognized for some very specific programs. When I was in

Melita—and the Honourable Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) was in Melita with me, as were a few others—and when I announced unilaterally that there will be \$50 an acre paid for every unseeded acreage, she will recall as I well recall, but that is not enough. It should be \$60, it should be \$70, it should be \$80. What I meant by that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, not necessarily universally, but the same kind of cost recovery for those farmers who had spent \$20-\$30 on fertilizer, as some had done in the Red River Valley, the same kind that needed other kinds of assistance in that program. That would have matched up some of those additional dollars.

I believe this Government can do it, this Government ought to do it. This Government, if they are truly interested in recognizing the magnitude of the difficulty, I am afraid—and I do not like to be cynical about a new government. They are all pretty decent people—but I am afraid in this instance they have found it pretty convenient, the feds, their friends—I call them their friends. You have to remember that. I mean, the day they got elected the headlines—Axworthy and this Government says, oh, now with the New Democrats and the federal Liberal Government it will be easier to work with. There will be a better working relationship with them.

So I will tell you exactly what has happened. Their friends have whispered, we will never agree to the 90-10 program. That is what they have told them. That is what the feds have told you. So that gives them—but they have told them that quietly, you see. So they can now stand up and say, we want the 90-10 program knowing that they will never be called upon to deliver, and that is not fair. That is not bad politics, but that is not fair to a lot of farmers in need. That is the game that you are playing.

You know that the federal Government, or at least you do not have enough courage of your own convictions that you can play the hardball game with the Liberals. *[interjection]* Well, the Minister says she is going to play some hardball. I do not see a catcher's mask on her face and shin guards on her shins. She is not wearing any padding around her. That is where they are at. They are enjoying the kind of posturing that says, oh, yes, we are right there to help you, but

they have the comfort that as of now the feds are not going to be with them so they will never be called upon to do it. I am saying they could dispel that cynicism overnight if they paid their share now. Just put their share down now. If you are committed to a 90-10 pay the 10 now. Pretty easy.

You understand that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I can always kind of count on the Deputy Speaker for acknowledging and even if it was done quietly, his tacit support, you know. When I put forward some good propositions, he generally agreed with me on these issues. Even though he is now in the kind of vaulted position of a Deputy Speaker he cannot show any partisan leaning towards an individual member, deep down in his heart I know the Deputy Speaker agrees with me on this one.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, cut out the politics of this, and you say you want to take the politics out of it? Then put up your 10 percent. Thank you very much.

Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have some concerns that I would like to address in relationship to this Government and its agricultural policies and how it has approached its responsibility, its relationship to the community, of which a large percentage of my riding actually depends upon, and that is the agricultural sector. In looking at the resolution that the Minister put on the floor, at first glance there is not too much wrong with the resolution. I mean, it is a little bit like motherhood.

Well, I see the Member for Brandon West (Mr. Smith) is applauding, but he also, I have heard a moment or two ago, was critical of—I believe I heard him say he was critical of the amendments that this side of the House has put forward in relationship to this resolution.

I know my colleagues, who are well experienced in this issue, will probably put some of these points on the table, but I want to remind us of where we have arrived at with this debate and why it is that we are still having this debate. One would have assumed when this event that we are referring to occurred in the spring of 1999, it essentially was over by the end of July

in 1999 in terms of rainfall, and the rest of the time it has taken to dry up, frankly.

So why is this still on the table and why are we still debating it today? Frankly, I am quite resentful. I will be quite critical of the Government when they think that putting a resolution forward and ultimately getting all-party agreement is the panacea to dealing with the problems that have arisen from what was probably a historical event in western Manitoba with the excessive rainfall. The fact is, as I said, there are many things in their resolution.

The majority of the resolution makes sense, but they have avoided the nubbin of the question, and that is, as my learned colleague just put on record, if they are really serious about dealing with this problem, then they should simply say, now that they have reached this stage in the negotiations, the same as what we had to do last year during the height of this problem, and that is announce a program and be prepared to finance their share of it right now and forward that money right now.

I know government members can sit back and say, well, easy to say when you are in the Opposition benches, but let us keep one thing clear. There are a few members, still a few remnants of the Opposition from a couple of years ago who will remember some angst that has been forced on this House from time to time about, well, do certain regions of this province vote the wrong way. I challenge the Government to show their good will towards an area of this province that simply has not supported them electorally.

* (16:20)

Is that why they are dragging their feet? Is that why they are unimaginative in their approach to a solution of this funding problem for southwestern Manitoba? Is that why they believe that rhetoric that sells in the urban papers is all they need to do to keep the appearance of supporting those farmers in western Manitoba, who suffered from not only a severe crop loss, they suffered far beyond that, because the nature of the situation was that while there was over a million acres unseeded, those who did seed, in many cases their losses exceeded the losses of

those who were unable to get on the land. So it was a compounding problem and, as always happens in agriculture, the problem comes home to roost about a year later. There is a lag problem.

Some of these farmers were probably still selling their 1998 crop during a large portion of 1999. They were selling their calf crop. They were selling their grains. Their hay crop was still sufficient to maintain their cow herd, but just talk to the retailers, talk to the machinery dealers, talk to the service industry in our communities, and you will find out. I do not think the members opposite have taken that opportunity to talk to some of the service industries in rural western Manitoba and parts of southeastern Manitoba about the lag effect that is now coming home to roost.

Automobile salesmen are probably the first ones to feel the pinch. Regardless of what we think about automobile salesmen, they may well also be the barometer of what is happening in the agricultural community. In discussions with them, they have, all of a sudden, hit a calm in terms of sales, but that calm is nothing compared to those directly in the agricultural machinery supply business. They are flat out going backwards, and they are seriously concerned about the possibilities for employment and service that they can continue to deliver in our communities.

Why bother bringing that up in this discussion when we are talking about federal-provincial funding? I simply hope that there are some folks on the Government side who have a decent understanding of what is happening to the communities out there so they do not slough this off as just being an agricultural issue. It is just another farmer complaining. It is just another issue that, if we avoid it long enough, it will go away.

Well, I will tell you, the two members who represent Brandon, Brandon East and Brandon West, they can look around the Brandon community and they say, well, we are okay, Jack. There is expansion of the hog processing. There is a building boom going on in the city. There is a demand for first-time houses, certainly. All of that is good, but there is a cloud

on the horizon. The fact that the surrounding areas are not able to produce the buoyant revenues that they did a year ago and two years ago, two years ago for sure, now is starting to have some impact in their own communities. I would hope that those two members would listen to the Chamber of Commerce when they say: Is it too late? How much shelf life has this argument got? When do we just throw in the towel and say let us forget about it? Or do we keep hammering this Government, or do we keep using and encouraging the Opposition to raise the issue?

Frankly, I would encourage those two members to listen to the Chamber of Commerce and take that message to your colleagues in government, and take it to them strongly, because there is another issue that has disturbed me to a great extent about how the economics of funding agricultural relief has been viewed by this Government. Shortly after taking office, the ink was not dry on the ministers' certificates, and they were claiming that there was a deficit in this province. I heard distinctly the new Premier saying that he was not going to touch the Fiscal Stabilization Fund. Do not touch the Fiscal Stabilization Fund. We might need that next year ourselves.

Well, when we funded the money for the \$50-an-acre unseeded acreage plan, we told the people at the time that that money would come from the Fiscal Stabilization Fund. We said that is what that was clearly in place for. Whether it was agriculture, whether it was forestry, whether it was floods in towns or villages, it was there for unexpected expenditures and particularly emergencies. I am pleased to see agreement from the Member for Brandon West (Mr. Smith), because in fact if indeed they want to take this message to their colleagues in caucus then they should simply say—*[interjection]* He is saying he does not want to take it to his colleagues in caucus? Well, apparently the Member for Brandon West is now waving his hand and shaking his head. I am not sure he wants to carry forward the message, but I have a message for him, even if he does not want to carry it forward. That is, remember the rural community ultimately does support even towns as large as Brandon, and the impact of it, if it is not smoothed out to some extent, there will be a

lingering and a heart-wrenching difficult period of months ahead of us as a result of the spring of 1999 problem.

I distinctly refer to the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, because if this Government were to choose to make an announcement that it wants to contribute to the recovery of the agricultural economy in rural western Manitoba and the wet areas of the province in the southeast, then they can say that they have their dollars on the table. In fact, if they want to do something that would really catch the attention of the voters in that area, then they should simply say: We have now given up on the federal Government. We do not think they are going to come to the table, but we are prepared to fund a 50-50 process if that is what it takes to bring the federal Government to the table.

I am tired, and all of my colleagues on this side are tired of listening, to the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) saying: We will accept whatever program the federal Government puts on the table. It does not matter what it is, we will accept it.

But when pressed in this House, she will never acknowledge that that could include a 50-50 funding program. And why will she not conclude that? Because I think the Treasury Board has probably told the Minister of Agriculture this is a 90-10 problem. These guys do not vote for us anyway, so just keep talking and maybe it will go away. Frankly, if that is the way the farmers of western Manitoba are going to be treated by this administration in terms of dealing with agricultural problems, then there will be a day of reckoning. That is why I referenced the two members for Brandon, because they will be the butt of that day of reckoning if they do not take this argument to their colleagues.

The Member for Dauphin says, well, he might be the butt of some of this debate too, and he might well be, but if he wants to jump in and support this argument, then I think it is highly appropriate that he do so, because there are people in that area of the province who have also suffered significantly.

The real concern these three members have to keep in mind if they sincerely want to address this problem—they know the money is in the Fiscal Stabilization Fund. They know that when the federal Government transferred a hundred million dollars to this province that this Minister did not directly attribute any of that money toward the flood-damaged land. They spread that across the province, a little syrup for all of us, and it is gratefully received in all farm households, believe me, but the problem we have got is that those who lost their crop are also dealing with a lost crop and devastating prices on the grain side. That is a deadly combination. Let us make sure that we do not let our colleagues in this House, regardless of which side they are on, forget that.

You can drive just north of Ste. Rose or you can drive, I imagine, a few miles from where I stand at this moment, and you will find 1999 crops that were at a record level. So it is difficult for me to stand in front of a broad audience and say that there are farmers out there who are being devastated when, at the same time, individuals might well know somebody who has just said that they have just had the yield of a lifetime. That was the unusual problem that occurred last year. There are people five miles apart, and there are colleagues on this side who can relate to that, who on a per-acre basis probably have a hundred dollars difference between their income per acre on the same land.

* (16:30)

So if this Government wants to put this resolution forward, then I suggest that our amendment is not at all put forward in bad faith. In fact, it is put forward in a way to encourage, as some of us have said on the record in the media in Brandon within the last week, that if this Government truly is committed to dealing with this issue and if we are to accept that the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) is sincere in her comments, then she should say yes, it appears that we are going to have to go with a 50-50 program in order to support the land and the farmers who are trying to farm the land that was damaged last year.

Why should I encourage that Minister? Why should anybody on this side of the House talk

about getting away from 90-10 to a 50-50? Because traditionally 90-10 is always the disaster assistance formula. Frankly, the vast majority of people out in the voting public today will believe that 90-10 was the process that was in place for the Red River Valley. Everybody believes that was how it was funded. The fact is that as the negotiations continued about the various programs that were available for the farmers, the federal Government announced the direct aid program for business recovery and for farm income losses. That was announced by a federal program, and I give them credit for announcing it, as I think everyone else does. It was needed, there were some things around it that concerned us, but it was needed, and the people who accepted that money were grateful and appreciative of the help that they got.

But the one thing that always happens far too often in federal-provincial relationships is that one program gets put alongside another, and they become a package. As we negotiate the package, the federal Government will say, well, we will pay for this one, we want you to pay for that one, and we will go over here with 90-10. This program is 50-50. This program is 60-40. It is wrapped together in—I think we had a \$19-million program, one of the announcements. Another one was a \$36-million program that we announced without federal support, by the way.

I am pleased to see that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) probably has his ear cocked to hear this, because the fact is that as the negotiations proceeded, it ended up that the JERI-style program, and I hate these acronyms, but the program that went out to help recover lost inputs, it was there for business loss recovery. That ended up being funded 50-50.

It becomes such a convoluted series of announcements and a large package pulled together and funded in the manner that I just described, I do not blame 99 percent of the population for believing that this was a 90-10 or maybe 100 percent, because the announcement was all federal. It was all federal to begin with. We did not even have our logo on the bottom of the first announcement that they made, but the Manitoba taxpayers ended up paying 50 percent. They did it and they did it with an open heart and willingness to support the agricultural

community and the people who were being severely damaged and impacted by the events of 1997. In fact, some of them are lingering from 1996, from the water that came down the Assiniboine.

Now, that I think ties together the argument that I sincerely believe, that this Government will have wholehearted support on this side of the House if they are prepared to lead the way and say, here is the money that we are prepared to commit. We know the amount that is needed out there. I am suggesting they probably need to make a 50-50 announcement, make a 60-40 announcement, but do something, because the federal Government may well be embarrassed into coming to the table. If they do not, at least you have made a direct contribution from the taxpaying public, if you will, on behalf of the taxpayers of this province, to support the farmers who find themselves in this dire situation.

You might say, well, we are halfway through seeding and you would be road kill out there right now if you stepped in front of somebody's tractor. Everybody is going as hard as they can. How are they getting the money to get the crop in? Well, probably the vast majority of NISA savings have been dropped to the bottom. There certainly will be exceptions, but I would believe sincerely the vast majority of them are fully withdrawn.

NISA is a program that farmers contribute to with matching dollars coming from provincial and federal treasuries as a stabilization program on a whole farm stabilization basis, but that money is now gone. The money that the provincial ministry is administering through Manitoba Crop Insurance, that amounts to seven, eight, nine thousand dollars for a NISA applicant. Let us put that in perspective for our urban colleagues.

I would suggest that the average farm today probably has on the low side eight to nine thousand dollars, on the high side fifteen to twenty thousand dollars' worth of fuel costs annually. I will use my own example. I run quite a modest operation, to tell you the truth. My fuel costs are just about what I am going to get out of this program. That is much appreciated. I understand, however, that that money also goes

to the same areas where some of them have absolutely bumper crops.

So what we have done is taken a program, and goodness knows, agriculture has been under strain, so it has been put across the entire agricultural workforce, if you will, ownership, the rural community that makes its living from primarily grain production for sure, livestock production. Those farmers who suffered the excess moisture, those who could not seed a crop or in the end seeded a crop that ended up being more costly than if they had left the land vacant have gotten no further consideration than every other NISA contract holder or crop insurance contract holder in this province.

I do not intend to stand here and be critical of what the Minister has done, but I am critical of her and of her Premier indicating that somehow they have been putting money into the wetlands of this province. No pun intended, but that is what they were last year. We had cattails growing in places where we did not even know we had low spots.

An Honourable Member: You did not know you had cats.

Mr. Cummings: My colleague says we did not know we had that many cats, but we had cattails all over the place. It was simply a reflection of how wet it was in areas that normally it did not even collect let alone stay wet enough for cattails to germinate and grow.

Frankly, my argument is very simple. I want to make it directly through the Chair to the man who I think has about as good a grasp as anybody in government today about where the opportunity is, whether or not he can put money into parts of agriculture or any part of the economy. I would say to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) if he wants to make the Ministry of Agriculture so that it can hold its head up in southwestern Manitoba so that his Minister does not have to go out there and take continual abuse from people like me who know darn well there has not been a darn thing done for the areas of excessive moisture, other than the \$50 an acre that the Conservative Government announced—and by the way, let us not forget that that \$50 an acre, if any one of those farmers became eligible

for AIDA, which is another farm program, an acronym, Agriculture Disaster Income Assistance, I believe. [*interjection*] Agriculture Income Disaster Assistance, whatever. The words "disaster" and "income" are both in there in whatever order. The point is that half of that money is being clawed back when you apply if you are in fact eligible to receive any money out of that program.

So I would sincerely lodge my argument with the Minister of Finance that when he comes in those steps next Wednesday—and I do not know what colour corsage he is going to wear, but I am sure he will be wearing one—that I hope that as he is putting it on and as he is polishing his shoes that he will think about those farmers in western Manitoba, who in some cases have doubled their loans with the banks where the banks have been willing to do that. In some cases, they have exposed themselves to one of the most difficult financing situations that a farmer could ever find himself in. They have gone to supplier financing.

I do not have any particular bone to pick with farm suppliers, but generally speaking they are backed by the Shells, by the Esso, by the Comincos, by the other large corporate giants, and even our own pools, our UGG, our Agricore, they are large corporate entities, and they will extend credit against inputs. But, and it is a heavy "but," if you miss the deadline that they give you, you are automatically in the 20% interest against your inputs. I can tell you, when that happens, the last one out shut the lights off because that farmer is finished.

* (16:40)

You can pay 7 percent, he can pay 8 percent, he can probably even make it with 10 if we have a decent crop this year and if the prices start to rebound, but if he gets a poor market and is unable to move the product at the right time and he is in to 20 percent, 24 percent, 2 percent per month would likely be a going rate. The incentive is there to get it paid off, but if he cannot get it paid off he is dead in the water. That is the reason that I wanted to put on the record the concern that we have that we believe this Government has not taken seriously enough the problem we see in the land out there.

There is an old adage that if a farmer was not complaining about something he would not have anything to talk about. That is only partly true. There are other farmers out there today who are not talking. They are thinking about the kinds of things that I just described. They are wondering if they have a crop failure this year—maybe it will be a drought. I mean, we seem to have swung almost into that cycle again—if the productivity is not high and if the markets do not take a rapid upturn. I just saw this morning that the Midwest is looking at 90 percent, 95 percent, 78 percent, 85 percent of normal rainfall, which has a tremendous impact on oil and coarse grain prices. That is going to crush some of these farmers.

Now there is an evolution in agriculture that is occurring since the Crow rate was abandoned. This, frankly, is part of that evolution as we see certain farmers are going to have to change their practices, as certain farmers are going to have to move on in their life choice of career, but combine that with the events that we have just seen in the spring of 1999 and you are going to compound those problems to a point where you will absolutely devastate some of our small communities.

You might ask: So what happens if Melita shrinks? What happens if Neepawa and Killarney do not have a full supply of farm dealerships to provide services? Well, eventually, I will tell you what happens. Brandon starts to back up. Brandon starts to be dependent solely on the major industries that are manufacturing or processing, but agribusiness, which is still, I would say, one of the three main legs of the stool that supports Brandon, agriculture will collapse. If it does not collapse in a major way, it will change in a way that will permanently change the face of our agricultural communities. Despite the disparaging remarks that I might make about whether there is enough rural representation and so on, I do not think this Government wants that on their conscience as a new government in the first year of their administration. I do not think they want that on their conscience, and I am counting on the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) to consider that as he polishes his shoes next Wednesday.

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will make some comments about this resolution, and I am interested always to follow the debate from my honourable friend across the way, listening to him talk about how we have not done anything, he says. If we look at what we have done, not only when we were in opposition, but specifically since we have been in government compared to what they have done as a party now in opposition, I think that people would conclude that the actions of the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), the actions of the Member for Thompson, the minister for transportation, responsible for the Emergency Measures Operations (Mr. Ashton), and by the Premier (Mr. Doer) and a number of other MLAs on this side of the House have gone a longer way of being constructive to address this very serious problem. The Member has suggested that perhaps there are not enough members on this side of the House that represent the rural area to make this issue high on the agenda of the Government, but I do not think that is the case. I think that members on this side of the House have done a fine job of raising the issue.

I look, though, at the unhelpfulness of some of the actions of members across the way. It was interesting that, when we first started the session only a few short days ago, we were anticipating on this side of the House that they would bring forward perhaps an emergency resolution. Perhaps they would have brought forward some kind of a motion; perhaps there would have been grievances; perhaps there would have been a number of mechanisms at the disposal of members opposite to raise this issue. But they did none of that. Immediately, those first days of the session, we saw that they were going to play cheap politics rather than advocate on behalf of their constituents and farmers on the southwest part of the province—and other parts of the province, I would also add. They chose to raise the issues around gaming rather than to put forward, as their priority, issues around the farm crisis. Now they get up here, and they make long-winded speeches about that we are not doing anything. The other thing that they have done since becoming members of the Opposition rather than working with the Government, as we did when we were in Opposition—we had a partnership. We worked together; we tried to

present ourselves as a unified group for Manitoba. No, that is not the approach that they have taken. Their Agriculture critic tried to go it alone and started making recommendations contrary to what had been agreed to previously and has suffered the consequences where even the *Brandon Sun* has been critical of his actions and the "partisan rhetoric," to quote the *Brandon Sun*, that he has used.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you look at the record of this Government on this issue, we recognize that the compensation for farmers from last year's flood did not go far enough, that they were not compensated for a lot of their agriculture materials, they were not compensated for the losses related to not being able to seed a crop.

We began immediately after taking office to raise those issues with the federal Government. Minister Wowchuk and Minister Ashton have met with you-name-it from the federal Government—Minister Eggleton, Minister Axworthy, Minister Duhamel and a number of other MPs from Manitoba—to try and get the same kind of treatment for Manitoba farmers as other Canadian farmers and producers were the beneficiaries of during similar floods and similar natural disasters, whether it was the ice storms in Québec and Ontario previously or even formerly in the Red River Valley flood.

So those arguments, those recommendations have been taken forward. On March 22, Minister Wowchuk went to Ottawa and met with the federal Agriculture Minister, Lyle Vanclief, and the Secretary of State for Rural Development, Andy Mitchell, and Minister Ashton has corresponded on a number of occasions, attended several meetings with the federal Government to request their assistance in funding of this disaster.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

Minister Ashton and Minister Wowchuk held a press conference on April 6 when they were acknowledged in receipt of a letter from the federal Minister responsible for emergency preparedness, Art Eggleton, that farmers' expenses such as loss of inputs and land restoration would not be included as eligible

payments under the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements. This is something that has occurred then ever since. One minister will say: That is not our department, it is the responsibility of Agriculture. It is not an issue for emergency measures or emergency preparedness. You go to that department, and they will say: No, that is not our problem; you have to go back and try this Minister, try Western Diversification, try Agriculture Canada.

This has been the shell game that the federal Government has played on this issue over the last number of months. Consequently it is understandable that farmers are going to be frustrated. Canadian citizens do not expect that we here as legislators and parliamentarians are paid and elected to play that kind of game of, it is not my jurisdiction, so farmers came to the Legislature on April 12 to ask the provincial Government to, in the absence of any help from the federal Government, provide some disaster assistance to these farmers.

It puts the provincial Government in a complicated position. The federal Government has a special responsibility to help provinces deal with disasters. The provinces do not have the financial ability to go it alone. Canadians expect the federal Government to help, for example, in the Saguenay flood in Québec, in the eastern ice storms and in the Manitoba flood during 1997 in the Red River Valley. In those situations, Québec farmers were compensated for damages to maple trees and so should the fields in southwestern Manitoba be compensated.

Now, the members opposite have complained about the way that the new Government has attempted to negotiate with the federal Government on this issue, but Manitoba has requested a number of funding arrangements to get money into southwestern Manitoba. We have requested the application from the Jobs and Economic Recovery Initiative, or the JERI program, a 50-50 cost-shared program of the federal Government. We have requested that they utilize the 90-10 DFA program with funds from the Western Economic Diversification fund, but each request has been rejected.

In the *Winnipeg Free Press* on April 12, John Harvard is quoted as saying that economic recovery funds might still be available through

another program like the Western Economic Diversification if the Province is willing to cover half the costs. It then said the Minister said that he was challenging the Province to make a 50-50 proposal and he would see what he would be able to do with that. Those are the kinds of statements that are made by, notably, a Manitoba MP who has some responsibilities related to federal Government.

But it seems when we are dealing with the federal ministers who have no connection to Manitoba that it is a far different story. Contrary to John Harvard's statements, when Steve Ashton wrote to Ron Duhamel on November 29 in 1999 requesting the same level of assistance for farmers in the southwest as for those in the Red River Valley in '97, this involved a 50-50 proposal. We argued that we should use the standards of the '97 JERI program provided after the '97 flood. This level of assistance would facilitate the restoration of land assets to pre-disaster states and would provide workable conditions, including coverage for losses on weed control and applied fertilizers and farm chemicals. It is incredible to think of the amount of fertilizers and other farm materials that have been washed away. One of the things that is of concern is the impact that that is having in the long term on the lands all across the province, on our water resources. There has to be some recognition of that. Assistance on forage restoration and hay shortfalls due to the inaccessibility of the fields would also be something that would be an option to be considered as part of this program.

Unfortunately, with each of these requests made to Minister Eggleton, to Minister Duhamel and to Minister Vanclief, we have been told that this disaster is the responsibility of different departments. I do not know if there was ever an attempt to get all of those ministers together in one room at the same time with the Manitoba delegation, but it seems that is what is necessary in dealing with this situation. We cannot have Manitoba ministers going there to Ottawa and talking with each of these ministries independently because they have played this one off the other where it is not my responsibility; it is another department's responsibility. Minister Axworthy had given the indication that there is support coming, but he was not able to deliver.

Farmers need a clear answer. They do not want to see the federal Government continue to operate in this way. They, now, I think have had a more clear indication, but sadly it is not the kind of support here in Manitoba that is necessary and as can be expected. As a federal Government, they have to deal fairly with all parts of the country. The rules for these programs have to be applied fairly all across the country.

With all of that said, there has been increased support provided to help achieve some compensation for farmers who suffered dire losses in that '99 flood. The federal Department of Agriculture and Food has expended \$70 million, \$50-per-acre payment for the southwest, in addition to a 37.5 basic 1999 AIDA program for approximately \$20 million in AIDA program enhancements. The provincial Government contributed over \$40 million to those programs in the recently announced Canada-Manitoba Adjustment Program along with the federal Government to provide \$100 million to grain and oilseed producers. So when the members opposite say that this Government has done nothing, they should realize that almost \$170 million has been allocated for Manitoba farmers.

The members opposite I think have to get their priorities straight. Are they going to work with the new Government in advocating to Ottawa on behalf of farmers in the province, or do they want to see what kind of politics that they can play and not really prioritize this in a way that is going to have the results that we need in the province?

We know that when there are disasters that affect our agricultural industry and agricultural communities that it is going to have far-reaching effects in the province. We know that the variety of spinoff industries related to farming are integral to the rural economy. It is interesting and ironic in some ways that we are having this debate here today this year which is exceptionally dry, when other years just previous we had record floods, that we had just last year a 500 percent greater than normal rainfall in many of the areas of the province.

Our message is clear to all Manitobans and to the federal Government and to members

opposite, that we recognize the seriousness of this disaster, we have been working on it and will continue to do so. It is a Manitoba issue. We are disappointed that the Tories are trying to make it a partisan issue and that they have not worked co-operatively in a unified way with the Government all through this situation. We are still working with the federal Government, but they have said that they are not being forthcoming with hard numbers. We need a concrete commitment from them. It is clear that we cannot have a situation like this with 1.1 million acres of land being unseeded and not have that affect all of us all across the province.

When an area is declared a disaster, as it was in that situation, we would expect that that would be followed up by the rules of disaster assistance being applied fairly here in Manitoba, just as it was to be applied anywhere else in the country. We cannot have a situation that I am concerned has developed with the federal Government, where they are picking and choosing the kinds of program allocations, the kinds of issues that they address more on a basis of election readiness or election preparedness, rather than on a basis of fairness, a basis of equity and a basis of dealing with the real situations that are facing different parts of the country in an equitable and fair way.

In the future, I know that the new Government, the NDP Government here in Manitoba will continue to fight for the interests of farmers in the southwest of Manitoba and indeed of all areas of Manitoba. We know that this affected the Neepawa area, the Minnedosa area and Dauphin area, as well as some parts of the southeastern part of Manitoba.

It is imperative that the federal Government join Manitoba in recognizing the urgency of this situation and clearly identify what financial assistance is available for southwestern Manitoba. We are calling on the federal Liberal caucus to urge the federal Cabinet to reverse the Minister's decision and provide support to farmers in southwestern Manitoba.

We urge the federal Government to assume its seat at the table in good faith in keeping with Minister Axworthy's commitments and the historical precedent. Minister Ashton is calling

for urgent meetings with Manitoba Liberal MPs so we can identify what financial assistance will be available, if any.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the Honourable Member will have 24 minutes remaining.

The hour being 5 p.m., it is time for private members' hour.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Deputy Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I believe there may be a willingness to call it six o'clock.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it 6 p.m.?

An Honourable Member: No.

An Honourable Member: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed? Did I hear a no? Order, please. I heard a no.

Is it the will of the House to call it six o'clock?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed. *[Agreed]*

The hour being 6 p.m., the House stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. Monday.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 4, 2000

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